SESSION BOOK

SCS #1042

Thomas F. Torrance

THE FORMER CHURCH OF ALYTH, TAKEN DOWN SOON AFTER 1840.

*(From a Painting, date about 1816—the only one known to exist.)*

# AN
# OLD SESSION BOOK

## Being Studies in Alyth's Second Session Book

BY

JAMES MEIKLE, B.D.

MINISTER AT ALYTH

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TO

My Wife

AND TO

The Congregation of Alyth
Parish Church

# PREFACE

Some portions of this book, including the story of the Discipline of the Church and the Ordinary Services, now appear in print for the first time; but the remainder was prepared for the Alyth Supplement to *Life and Work*, and did its part in increasing the circulation of the magazine. Of the articles which appeared therein, one dates from 1904; note A of the Appendix, from 1907; and the rest, from 1910 to 1917 inclusive. The original purpose of these studies is naturally reflected in the subjects discussed and in their treatment.

I have to thank many persons for information. Some of these are named in the body of the book; and among the others are Dr. Maitland Anderson (St. Andrews), Mr. R. K. Hannay (Edinburgh) and Mr. P. MacGregor Chalmers (Glasgow).

Without deducting the cost of printing and publishing, the whole income drawn from the sale of this book is devoted to the fund for building, buying, hiring,

furnishing, or endowing a HALL FOR THE PARISH CHURCH; and every purchase is at the same time a War contribution, since, for the present, the proceeds will be invested in War Funds.

JAMES MEIKLE.

THE MANSE,
ALYTH,
*May, 1918.*

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Page 24, line 12, *for* butcher, *read* baxter.

,, 26, ,, 19, *for* 1698, *read* 1693.

,, 180, ,, 21, *after* ago, *add* But in *Macfarlane's Geographical Collections* of date 1727, recently published by the Scottish History Society, the width of the church is given as 49½ feet. So the width had been doubled when the arcade was built.

# PART I.

## THE GENERAL STORY OF PERSONS AND AFFAIRS.

# INTRODUCTORY.

By permission of the Kirk Session, a volume of its Minutes has been placed at my disposal for the purpose of publishing anything that may be of general interest in so far as that can be discreetly done. The only possible occasion for discretion will be in handling the cases of discipline, some classes of which must usually be touched with a delicate hand, if touched at all; and perhaps also in withholding certain names on the lists of "the ordinar poor," which may still be characteristic of the place, though possibly the bearers had no blood connection with anybody now living.

The volume covers the period from 1669 A.D. to 1688 A.D., besides which there are a few pages of brief informal Minutes belonging to the years 1698 and 1699. It had originally contained Minutes to 1707, for near the end is a note in a modern hand saying that the remainder (1688-1707) had been retained by the Registrar-General.

It is a pity that a beginning cannot be made with our oldest volume of Session Records instead of the second oldest, but this is the most ancient that is in our possession, and its interest is by no means second rate. The previous volume, which gives Minutes from 1637 A.D., had baptismal and other records mixed up with the Minutes, and was seized by Act of Parliament at the introduction of the Registration Act and stored

in the Register House, Edinburgh. I have read most of it there and made some notes, but a great deal of time and attention would require to be spent on note taking before any proper account could be given of its contents, and that time and attention is easier given to the second volume, which can be taken up at any odd moment and riddled by degrees.

This Session Book duly records its own price: in its original form it cost twenty-eight shillings Scots, and though a shilling Scots is usually said to be equal to a penny sterling, yet, when we come to deal with the numerous prices recorded in the book, we shall see that very often a shilling Scots bought as much as a shilling sterling would do now. On the same day (November 14, 1669) thirty shillings are given "to buy a coat to a poor bodie," and it may be added that on January 3, 1675, twenty-four shillings are given for another "peper book to fill up the baptisms and marriages since our minister Mr Thomas his entrie."

It is particularly fortunate that the volume under review covers the whole ministry of Mr. Thomas Robertson, whose initials are on our old Communion Cups. The first Minute, which is long and interesting, records his selection as "Colleague and Helper" in September, 1669, and details of the Church life of the parish are given with great completeness till after his death in November, 1685, and for a few years more. Through all that time there is a Minute at least once every week, for the Session met every Sunday. During the first few years of the volume each Minute tacitly

assumes, rather than states, that there has been a meeting of Session. It begins simply with the date, then it gives the name of the preacher and his text or texts, then it states any case of discipline, or any work requiring to be paid, or any money distributed to the poor, and it finishes with the amount collected at the Church, and sometimes it adds that this money is "imboxt." There is never any signature added, as is done in modern times, but from August, 1673, till after the placing of a new minister in 1686, there is a more formal mode of beginning, except in the minister's absence when there would be no constituted meeting. Following the date, during these thirteen years, there usually comes: "The session-conveened and gods name incalled upon. The minister preatched before and afternoon" on such and such texts. Another formal beginning is "The session mett and gods name incalled on the minister preached [texts] and examined after session."

Most of the book is written in a very fine hand, though the ink is faded and brown with age, and it has all been made out; but many of the letters are so unlike ours, and contractions are so frequent, that ministers and Session Clerks have been known to have books in that style in their possession through a life time without acquiring the power of reading them, and until one has had some experience it is possible to make many a blunder.

At first, for instance, I mistook Jean for Joan, and wondered why Joan was so common long ago in Alyth.

The e was then written like an o with a slight loop or the remains of a slight loop at the top.

Also the commonest form of h was with a tail going below the line instead of above, and once when it was rather more like one of the forms of y than usual a certain article was supposed to be fastened "in the west end of the kirk yard to the piller" there. Much research elsewhere proved there was no unique removal of this article to the outside, and the conclusion was drawn that not even a Session Book was verbally inspired. But the grounds were inadequate, for the true reading was that it was fastened in the west end of the kirk, hard to a particular pillar!

After a course of reading in this book I think I understand how certain common mistakes have arisen. I think I understand, for example, how some have gathered the impression that "Ogilvy" was originally "Ogilby," for in that word every letter is quite modern except the v, which looks for all the world like a modern b: v and b differed from each other as little then as q and g differ from each other in handwriting now. There is no b in the root if the word, as seems most probable, be Pictish, corresponding to the Welsh Uchel-fa = high place—a spot which must be sought in the Glen of Ogilvy.

Then, also, one of the ways of making a capital F was to double the small f. Thus we get ffebruar, and no doubt this accounts for what Baring-Gould calls the affectation of some people spelling their name Ffinch,

Ffoukes, Ffrench. It is an affectation with a very simple explanation behind it.

The use of capital letters, let me say, does not appear to have been the cut and dried thing that it is now. Even names of persons may quite as readily want them as have them, and if the Christian name chance to be written with a capital, the surname may possibly want it. You will have noticed from the quotations that God is written with a small g.

And if the use of capitals is not very orthodox, according to modern rules, neither is the spelling. Not only do different writers spell differently, but if you go over the Minutes of any one writer, you find that he is by no means monotonous in this respect. And yet though there is a certain amount of freedom, there are apparently spellings which are recognised as mistakes, for in 1672 "Apprill" is three times corrected by small letters above into "Aprile," and "Agust" is three times similarly corrected into "August."

It must not be supposed that the blame for this variety of spelling is to be laid on the illiteracy of the writer, for most part of this book was written by the parish schoolmaster, who was an M.A.

Some of the apparent mis-spellings are due to certain letters being pronounced differently from their present mode. For example, long e retains the ancient pronunciation still preserved on the Continent: "peper" would be sounded not "peeper" nor "pepper" but "paper." And unless we remember that the vowel y

had our e sound, we should very likely fail to recognise that when a mason got two and a half merks for "owttryding the pointing and his work done to the churche," he was not outriding anything but outredding, *i.e.*, finishing, it.

Then again u, v, and w, all originally forms of the same letter, had not yet crystallized into their present use. If one man was a "witness," and another a "vitness," and a third a "uitness," they all pronounced the word in the same way; and these letters have, therefore, the same claim to be modernised as the style of the writing. That is not purposed, however, because it would be difficult to draw the line if in quotations one began to change the ancient spellings.

A real and characteristic mistake of the period was the use of the letter y in yt and ye, etc., with the sound of th by error for an extinct letter of somewhat similar shape which had that sound. This mistake is not characteristic of our MS. volume, and least of all when the hand is that of the Clerk. Rather more often does he make the mistake of putting z for another extinct letter originally a g, which was like to z in form, but more properly expressed in recent centuries by y at the beginning of words and by g or gh or even y in the middle. This is a mistake no longer made in our ordinary words, but it is common in names, and it is one which has completely changed the sound of some of these names of people and places, *e.g.*, Mackenzie once pronounced Mackengie, and meaning son of Kenneth.

The oldest form of the name Alyth is the same as the

present, though the initial accented syllable might not then be long; but, while this spelling is found in our volume of Records, the word is almost never so set down by the Session Clerk himself, who regularly writes Alight; and if he sometimes puts down Alyt, the t is usually elevated to imply a contraction. It looks as though the folk-derivation from "ae licht" had even then been current and that he had believed in it. The want of absolutely fixed spellings was at that time a temptation to those who had a little learning.

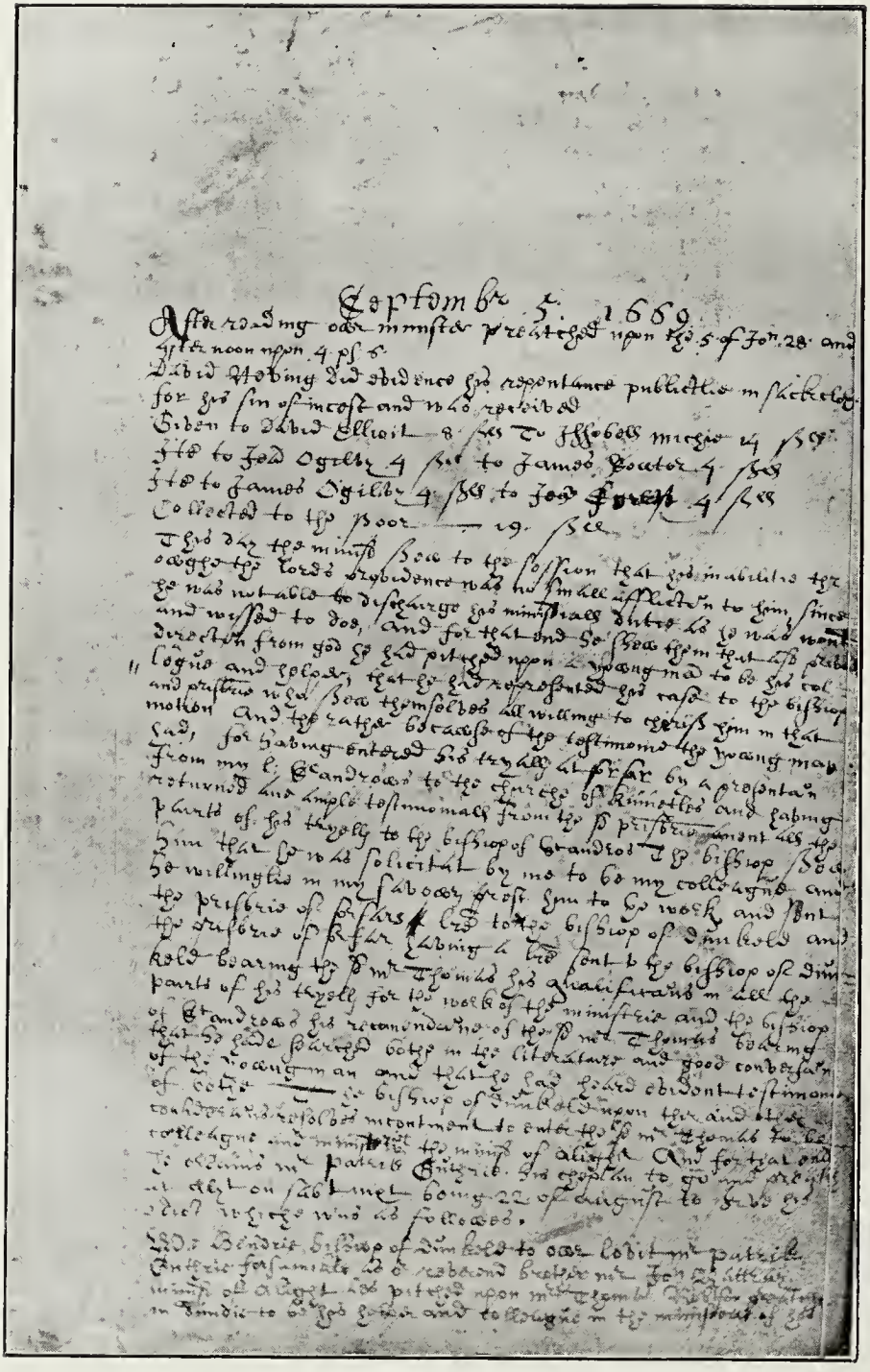
In quotations the contracted words will generally be given in full, for ease both in printing and in reading, and while, as a rule, one can readily decide how to spell them, there may sometimes be a doubt. Prisbrie, for instance, will be extended into prisbyterie, since some so pronounce the word, but it is not quite certain that, if the Session Clerk had written the word at full length, he would not have made it presbiterie.

It is rather interesting to observe that in such Records age is a tell-tale. On a few occasions after the writing of the Minutes a short note has been added, and the fact, which would at the time have been unnoticed in the general blackness, is now revealed by the shade of brown; as when to the conditions laid down before the digging of a grave is added—"and that the schoolmaster get his due."

Further notes of introduction or of explanation will naturally be brought in as we proceed; meantime, let us advance to a subject which will call for large quotations.

# TWO INDUCTIONS.

When the oldest volume of Session Records in our possession was begun, the Church of Scotland had been for seven years under Episcopal government, imposed from without by the fiat of King Charles II., and only the last few pages were written under a restored Presbyterianism; but throughout there is no trace of that dread of Prelacy as the half-way house to Rome, and of that passion for liberty, which in the West and South resulted in resistance and bitter persecution, and ended in securing the religious and civil freedom which we enjoy. This passiveness in Alyth may have been partly due to attachment to the old minister, Mr. John Rattray, a local laird and a man of high standing, who, like the Vicar of Bray, had always changed with the times. Whatever be the explanation, in Alyth, as in the North generally, the new system had a peaceful chance of shewing its merits without being condemned already by the baseness of its birth and the suspiciousness of its end, and it appears to have worked very well. It was really a blend of Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, and the atmosphere of our Minutes is almost wholly Presbyterian. Their very existence bears witness to the Kirk Session—a court with more extravagant powers then than now—and the frequent



THE FIRST PAGE OF THE SESSION BOOK.

From Photo. by John B. Maclachlan.

See page 11.

reference to the Presbytery shews its close and active relations with the moral and ecclesiastical life of the people, whereas the Bishop, whatever his value as a general inspector and overseer, is hardly mentioned at all, except when a new minister is to be ordained and inducted.

Into the Church life of the time we get an interesting glimpse in the first two Minutes, which are accordingly given almost in full.

*SEPTEMBR .5. 1669*

After reading owr minister preatched upon the .5. of Jon .28. and after noon upon 4 .ps: 6.

* * * * *

This day the minister shew to the session that his inabilitie throwghe the lords providence was no small affliction to him, since he was not able to dischairge his ministeriall dutie as he was wont and wissed to doe, And for that end he shew them that after privat direction from god he had pitched upon a yowng man to be his colleague and helper, that he had represented his case to the bishiop and prisbyterie who shew themselves all willing to chirish him in that motion And the rather becawse of the testimonie the yowng man had, for having entered his tryalls at forfar by a presentation from my l: St androws to the churche of Kinnetles and having returned ane ample testimoniall from the said prisbyterie anent all the pairts of his tryells to the bishiop of St andros The bishiop shew

him that he was solicitat by me to be my colleague and he willinglie in my favowrs prest him to the work and sent the prisbrie of forfars letter to the bishiop of dunkeld, and the prisbrie of forfar having a letter sent to the bishiop of dunkeld bearing the said Mr Thomas his qualifications in all the pairts of his tryells for the work of the ministrie and the bishiop of St androws his recomendatione of the said mr Thomas bearing that he hade searched bothe in the literature and good conversation of the yowng man and that he had heard evident testimonie of bothe. The bishiop of dunkeld upon thir and other considerations resolves incontinent to enter the said mr Thomas to be colleague and minister with the minister of alight. And for that end he ordains mr Patriek Guthrie his cheplan to go and preatch at alyt on sabbath nixt being 22 of august to serve his edict whiehe was as followes.

We Hendrie bishiop of dunkeld to owr lovit mr Patrik Guthrie forsamikle as our reverend brother mr Jon Rattray, minister of alight, hes pitehed upon mr Thomas Robertson preatcher in dundie to be his helper and colleague in the ministerie of his kirk of alight and full successor to him in the said ministerie after his departur whensoever the samin at the pleasure of god shall fall owt and that the said mr Thomas Robertson his admission to the said ministerie of alight is godwilling to be done at migle upon the first day of september unlesse som neeessar impediment oceurr whiche may interrupt the samin. Therefor we give yow owr full power to passe to the paroche kirk

of alight upon sowndie the 22 of this instant august 1669 and to warn by reading of thir presents all heretors and others concerned, that if they have any thing to object against the said mr Thomas his abilitie, qualification and good conversation why he may not be admitted to the said ministerie of alight to appear befor us or the said prisbyterie of migle the said first of september instant at migle in the howr of 11 a.m. with certification that if they doe not, Their silence will be taken for a plenarie consent, the whiche to doe we committ to yow owr full power by thir presents whiche yow are for to deliver execut and indorsed again to this berar Given under owr hand at migle the 21 day of august 1669.

The edict being read it was returned bak indorsed, and the bishop, migle 31 of august did writt to the moderator a letter shawing that he had cawsed serve ane edict at the kirk of alight intimating to that congregation that mr Thomas Robertson was to receive ordination to the sacred function of the ministerie of alight in order to his being helper to the present ministrie and to succeed him in the ministerie of the said parish desiring if any person or persons hade any thing to object against the said mr Thomas they might appear the 31 of august at the churche of migle and non appearing he had ordained him a minister of the gospell and therefor ordaining the prisbyterie to appoint on of their number to repair to the churche of alight on the sabbath the 12 of septr to admitt the

said mr Thomas to the ministerie of the churche of alight with all solemnities and ceremonies usuall in suche a caise and to give him full of possession of manse and glyb & as helper for the present and to have a right to all after the decease of the said mr John. The prisbyterie in obedience to his letter have nominat mr Georg Haliburton moderator to preatche the foirsaid day and admitt the said mr Thomas and also ordained intimation to be made to the said parish on the sabbath septr. 4 extracted owt of the minut book by mr Silvester lambie, minister at Essie, clark.

This day 5 of Septr. the minister did intimat to the congregation the letter sent from the bishiop of dunkeld to the moderator of the prisbyterie and their ordination concerning the admission of mr Thomas Robertson to be the 12 of septr.

*SEPTEMBER 2, SABTH. 12 DAY, 1669.*

This day mr Georg Haliburton, minister at cowper, preatched upon 6 of Isaia 5, 6, 7, 8 verses and after preatching he did admitt mr Thomas Robertson to the sacred function of the ministrie of the churche of Alight and to be colleague minister with mr John Rattray, present minister thereof during his liftime, and after his deathe to succeed him in the full chairg of the ministrie of the said churche and in the possession of all things belonging therunto and after he had made a long speache to the congregation

frequentlie met and to the said mr Thomas towching the points of his admission yet asking if ther were any that know anything to be objected against him and non ansuearing. Amongst many other ceremonies usual to be done in the admission of ministers he cawsed the bible with the kayes of the churche door be presented to him and the congregation being unanimowslie pleased gave him dixtram amoris manum.

* * * * *

It will be noted that the Presbytery as a whole did not meet for this induction as in the Presbyterian period, and that it was done on the Lord's day by one man, like a modern introduction. But usually these inductions were on a week day, and a committee of two or more members of the Presbytery carried them through. On this occasion the old minister of the parish may be said to have been the second member of a committee.

There is another induction in the book besides Mr. Thomas Robertson's, namely, that of his successor, whose process, so far as our Records shew, began on April 25, 1686. On that day Mr. John Fife, minister at Ruthven, preached in Alyth, "and did serve Mr John lowson his edict be the bishiop's order, in entering to this church and if any objection be made to report it at the church of ruthvain the 4 of may, next"—by no means too glaringly difficult since Ruthven is but three miles from Alyth, yet not so

easy as to lend itself to trivial objections. The presentee had been preacher at Meigle for a considerable time, had conducted services a few times in Alyth, and must have been well known by repute, and of opposition there is none noted. Accordingly, on May 23, Mr. William Many, expectant, preached, and "made mention and intimation of Mr John Lowson his admission for to be the first day and first tuesday of June and read the peper set down be Mr Thomas Blair, clerk to the prisbyterie for this effect as followes . . ." The terms need not be repeated, because they are in the ordinary style of such an edict, and differ from the older intimation chiefly in the absence of any statement that the young man had been "pitched upon"—a phrase which sounds like slang in our ears, though it bears the Addisonian hall-mark. But, in fine, The Right Reverend the Bishop of Dunkeld had ordained the Presbytery to induct Mr. John Lousone "if no objection should be made against him by the parishioners"; and accordingly, every test having been duly gone about, a day was appointed for the induction, on which day the Presbytery met at Alyth, and Mr. George Hay, minister at Coupar Angus, preached, and thereafter "had a speache directed to" Mr. John Lousone "concerning his ministeriall function and to the congregation frequentlie mett in his behalf. He was received by them by taking him be the hand and the keys of the kirk doors delivered to him."

The coincidence may be noted that both Mr. Thomas Robertson and his successor were inducted by the

minister of Coupar Angus, though meanwhile a new minister had been appointed there. It may be noted also that the Clerk of Presbytery was different on the two occasions. That was due not to the death or translation of the former clerk, for Silvester Lambie was still minister of Eassie, but to the custom of the time by which each minister of the Presbytery in turn had to undertake the duties of Clerk for six months.

It would not now be considered any part of the Kirk Session's duty to record in its Minutes the doings of the Presbytery in the induction of a minister, and so it is unexpectedly interesting to find these details in our Session Minutes of long ago.

# THE MINISTERS.

THREE ministers of Alyth are mentioned in the volume with which we are dealing—Mr. Thomas Robertson, whose ministry fills most of it, Mr. John Rattray, his predecessor, and Mr. John Lousone, his successor.

All these ministers are distinguished by the title Mr., which must be read as Master—or when the language is Latin, as Magister. It was not then given to all and sundry as now, but only to those who had attained the University degree of Master of Arts (M.A.). Perhaps the first departure from that rule was to apply it to all who had been University men, but probably as yet the rule was strictly kept. And though in the supplementary scroll Minutes there are preachers named "Mr. Oar," "Mr. Pitcairns," "Mr. Goudie," "Mr. Broun," yet in the body of the book no instance is found of the title "Mr." without the Christian name; and once when the Christian name was unknown, a blank was left, just as a blank is left after "Rev." by purists to-day if the Christian name be unknown.

The only Mr. John Rattray whose name appears on any contemporary Scottish University list is a student of good family—as may be judged by his high place on the list—who got his degree of M.A. at St. Andrews in 1618. Now, as the Bamff Charters show, a Mr. John Rattray, brother of David Rattray

of Craighall, witnessed a deed in 1623; and if only the University lists had been accurately kept in those days there would be no room for doubt that the two were identical, nor that this was the Mr. John Rattray, laird of Blackhills, who became minister of Rattray in 1629 and of Alyth in 1637. When in Rattray, he was the prime mover in getting the bridge built over the Ericht at the foot of the Boat Brae. In Alyth his ministry covered an eventful period, but as the Session Records of the main part of it are in our earliest volume, very little can be given here except a few details linking him with the larger history of the time. He was absent with the Perthshire Regiment from before July 21, 1644, until November 24, when "our minister this day returnd frome Ingland." On January 5, 1645, there was "no doctrin delivered because of the enimie"—the enemy being Montrose, who won his great triumph over Argyll at Inverlochy on the 2nd of February, on which day Mr. John Rattray preached in Alyth after his return from the General Assembly in Edinburgh. There was "ane alaram of the enimie" on March 30, and throughout April Church life was wholly out of gear. Again, on August 10, there was "no doctrin be reason of neirnis of ye enimie" (a statement very hurriedly written), and for a month from the middle of November things were again at a standstill. In July, 1646, Montrose was once more approaching, and on the 5th of that month Hendrie Cargill got ten shillings "for to go to the camp to trie and search some news from ye

malignants, and that we may be forwarnissed of their cuming upon us." On August 6, we are told, "Ther was no preatching withe us since the lest fast" (July 9), "because the enimie was quarterit in our bowndes. This day our minister taught." These details, which are given more for the sake of the great Marquis than of the minister, serve to remove some small current inaccuracies.

Quite in keeping with his zeal of previous years was the renewing of the "covenant and league" in December, 1648; the putting to Church discipline in August and September, 1649, of certain soldiers who were upon "the unlawfull ingadgment" in England; the public and sharp rebuke given to those who towards the evening had yoked their ploughs upon the day of thanksgiving for the defeat of the rebels at Balvennie; the due intimation in 1650 of prescribed warnings against "James Graham"; the thanksgiving held a month after date for the victory won over him on 27th April of that year; and the reception on February 9, 1651, in Alyth Parish Church, before a Committee of Presbytery, of "My Lord Ogilvy's" repentance in sackcloth "for his sinfull accession to General Major midltown's rebellion and for his sinfull miscarieges against the Covenant." *

A notable event which must not be omitted is that on May 12, 1650, "the paraphrasse of the psalmes appointed be the generall assemblie vas began to be practised" in Alyth. Surely there have not been many

* See page 62.

services since that day at which one or more of these psalms have not been sung by us.

A memorable year for Mr. John Rattray and for his parish, as well as for Scotland, was 1651, for the last effort of the Scots government to resist Cromwell flickered out in that year at Alyth. The governing Council had assembled there, and on August 25 the famous old General Leslie, Earl of Leven, had by their authority summoned the fencible men of Perthshire to gather to his banner. But they never arrived, for, three days later, the General and the Council, and with them, amongst others, the parish minister, were surprised by some of General Monk's cavalry from Dundee, and shipped off to the Tower of London. Thus taken, Mr. John Rattray was seen no more in Alyth till the week ending 26th June in the following year, when he "returned hom owt of prison from England."

Whether age had cooled his ardour, or whatever else were the cause, the critical year 1662 did not find Mr. John Rattray so zealous for the Covenant as he appears to have been previously; and with the whole Presbytery of Meigle, excepting only the minister of Airlie, he quietly acquiesced in the change of Church government determined by King Charles II. Under the new regime, the Moderator of the Presbytery was nominated by the Archbishop of St. Andrews (James Sharp) and the Bishop of Dunkeld, and was practically a permanent official; and if Mr. John Rattray was not the first to be accorded the distinction, he was the

second—being continued in office from 1663, when his predecessor and old fellow-prisoner in England, Mr. George Patillo of Newtyle, left the Presbytery, until he fell into ill health in 1667. Next year he had the further misfortune to break his leg, and in 1669 his growing infirmities, including deafness, forced him to apply for a colleague and helper. It is worthy of note that all parties concerned acquiesced in the man of his choice, to whom he could give, with a good conscience, the high praise he did give; but, inasmuch as the young minister married his daughter Isobel two or three months later, one sees wheels within wheels.

The tombstone of his wife, at the east end of the Arches, still remains to record the date of her death in 1671, and his sorrow.*

Till June, 1673, the old minister continued to do his share of the preaching, and sometimes even more, but of course the catechising mostly fell to the man who could hear the answers without difficulty. In August, 1674, he preached thrice, but never again. On the 6th of January, 1678, he was dying, and before the 13th he was dead—leaving his colleague, Mr. Thomas Robertson, in full charge.

Concerning this Mr. Thomas Robertson, the less need here be said than that most of what is stated in the other chapters is a record of his ministry. He too was a student of St. Andrew's, where he attained his M.A. degree in 1662; and after his Divinity course in the following years, he passed his trials for licence

* See Appendix.

to preach before the Presbytery of Dundee, in which town he continued to be a preacher until he was called to Alyth.

By his wife, Isobel Rattray, who died on or before February 11, 1677, he had four children—John, Margaret, Thomas (born and baptised on November 23, 1673), and Issobell. The Minute of March 9, 1679, excuses an omission because "our ministers dawchter was deadly sick"; and no doubt this refers to Margaret, since the name is repeated in the family borne to him by Anna Haliburton, his second wife. In this family there were four also—James, Margaret, Alexander, and Hanna, who was born posthumously in May, 1686; and as this child was presented for baptism by William Moncrief, "litster" (*i.e.*, dyer) in Alyth, it seems highly probable that Anna Haliburton was a near relative of his.

There is evidence in the Minutes that Mr. Thomas Robertson was not too robust. The prevailing fevers and agues of that undrained time, for one thing, seem to have afflicted him as they afflicted the later years of his predecessor. But he was a conscientious worker, and his diligent and faithful ministry must have helped to reconcile some who might otherwise have sided openly with the Covenanters. Nevertheless, although our book of Minutes shews no trace of dissent from the Episcopal regime or the mode of its introduction, the Presbytery Records prove that some of it existed. On July 7, 1685, "The minister of Alith asked advice of the presbitarie what he should doe with one William

Dick in his parioch who hath had two children baptised disorderly already and whose wife was near her time, & as he feared would take the same method with that child when born if it were not some way prevented." The Presbytery remitted the matter to the Bishop of Dunkeld for his opinion, and on August 4 it is stated that the Bishop "was concerned about it, & that he would take special notice of it." No more is said, however, and Mr. Thomas Robertson died in that same year between the 15th and the 22nd of November.

His successor, Mr. John Lousone, the son of a Dundee butcher, was yet another student of St. Andrews, where he graduated in Arts in 1679. Three years later, he was ready for licence by his native Presbytery, and thereafter he became chaplain to the Bishop of Dunkeld, and preacher at Meigle, whence he was inducted to Alyth. After his coming, our Minutes begin at once to be briefer and less formal, but whether this was due to his influence or to the fact that the old Clerk ceased to write them is not apparent. From these Minutes little can be culled regarding him except that he shewed some businesslike traits, and perhaps a certain cavalier masterliness of spirit, and also that he continued to have intimate relations with his ecclesiastical superior. On November 21, 1686, there was "no preaching but reading psalms and prayers becaus our minister was unexpectedly called to Edinburgh by the Bishop." Probably his "absence at Edinburgh" on February 6, 1687, and his continued absence from home till after March 6

was due to a similar summons issued under less haste. Possibly also his five weeks' absence in July and August of the same year, and other occasional absences, particularly when his pulpit was filled by an "expectant," suggest business engagements rather than anything else.

It might be rather a precarious subtlety to assume that Mr. John Lousone had part of his business in the far North, because one of those who preached in the summer of 1687 was Mr. Alexander Robertson, who had been an Aberdeen student and was now minister of Longside, near Peterhead; but it is pathetic to know that this man's Covenanting predecessor had been round at Alyth begging from the Session less than two years before.

The Minute of June 10, 1688—the last of the volume proper—is written by Mr. John Lousone himself in a swift, careless hand, shewing so little reverence for the dignity of a Session Book that it must have vexed the careful soul of the retiring Clerk if he was well enough to notice.

At the end of the same year, William of Orange landed, and ere long it fell to the lot of ministers to decide who was to have their allegiance. Mr. John Lousone was one of those who clung to King James, and being reported by the redoubtable William Dick, he was deprived by the Privy Council on October 10, 1689. He was not ejected from the Manse, however, for we find him preaching there regularly for nine months from the end of March, 1691, and thereafter

occasionally when there was no preacher in the church. The only two ministers who during that troublous period remained much more than a month at a time were Mr. John Mathers, who preached regularly from November 11, 1693, till April 28, 1695, and Mr. Thomas Ogilvy, a probationer, who followed him and went away at Whitsunday, 1697. Thereafter there was no sermon in the church for four months, and then began quite a series of different preachers who carried on the services till the regular settlement in 1702, of the beloved Mr. John Thomson, whose tombstone is close to that of the wife of Mr. John Rattray.* In the midst of the series Mr. John Lousone died. The date seems otherwise to be unknown, but, covered by transparent paper at the very bottom of the second last page of the isolated scroll Minutes bound up with our volume appears the statement: "[Mr Jo]hn Louson, minister of Alyth, died upon the tuentie day of May, 1698."

Mr. John Rattray, Mr. Thomas Robertson, and Mr. John Lousone lived when the Church of Scotland was passing through critical times, during which the form of her government swayed again and again between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy. Each had its ideals and its advantages, but in Scotland the fate of the one was bound up with liberty and the other with autocracy, and so far as the careers of the three men fall within our volume, all of them served the cause of reaction—two of them to their ease and the third to his misfortune.

* See Appendix.

# THE KIRK SESSION.

The powers of the Kirk Session, as our Minutes shew, and as will afterwards be apparent in detail, were much wider and greater than they are now. It was the only court in the parish which had the semblance of being popular in an age when the principle of popular rights was developing, and it was expected to supply public wants and to manage public work of the most unlikely description. For instance, we find our Kirk Session looking after the building and repairing of bridges at Alyth and at Room, and so the members were pontiffs in the obvious etymological sense—nor in that sense only, for their Church duties, especially their dispensing of the whole charity of the parish, and their enormous and unescapable powers of discipline, gave them quite a pontifical standing amid their own people.

In those days our Kirk Session met every Sunday, and the rather frequent form of Minute, "The session met and god's name incalled upon, the minister preached on [Text]," would seem to imply that the Session was constituted before the sermon, but on other occasions the Minute shews clearly that the business was done after the sermon or sermons and before the catechising; and some of them are inconsistent with the idea of any constituting of the Session at the beginning of the service. It appears likely, therefore,

that the form of Minute quoted above means simply that at the Session note was taken that the minister had preached on such and such a text.

Strictly and constitutionally, the members of Session were the minister and elders alone, but there were deacons at that time who were sometimes spoken of as "members of session," so all three must be discussed; and, as the ministers have been dealt with already, we now come to the elders.

At the time of Mr. Thomas Robertson's induction, their numbers were much reduced from what they had been in 1649. At least there were not more than five in 1671, two years after he came, whereas in 1649, according to the older Edinburgh volume, there were fourteen. We do not wonder, therefore, that measures were at length taken to add to the number of the Session, and on April 23, 1671, we read that "John Robertson of Tillemurdo being ane elder in Kirkmichall formerlie was received this day and admitted to be ane elder of the session," and on July 23 following we find the names of other three "thought upon, chosen and elected by the ministers and elders." Next Sunday their names were "read over publictlie in face of session", and it was "desired if any knew anything against them that they wold shew it timowslie, and the session being compleitlie conveened . . . . and those presentlie admitted, foirsaid, promised with upholding of their hands to be faitheful in their chairg received." Then follows a list of the names of the elders old and new:—

"Sir Gilbert Ramsay of bamffe
James Rattray of Rannagullon
John Robertson of Tillemurdo
David Ramsay of Balharrie
John Ramsay of miln of quiche
James Sowtor in alight
David Rattray of west forrest
John Crokat in Bairdmonie
Patrik Duncan portioner their. 9."

"Gilbert Ramsay fear of Bamff," who married a daughter of Sir Thomas Blair of Balthayock in 1634, and who had a son, Gilbert, buried in the church in January, 1636, became an elder in January, 1638, the great year of the Covenant. In August, 1642, he succeeded to the estate on the death of his father, who was also buried in the church. As was natural, he was a man of much consequence in the congregation, and he was frequently the "ruling elder" chosen to represent the Kirk Session in the Presbytery and Synod. In 1667 the title of baronet was conferred upon him, no doubt as being a man of family and importance, but directly because his third son, James, who was now his heir, and who was himself knighted three years after, had greatly distinguished himself at the battle of Rullion Green against the Covenanters.* The sentiment of Scotland chiefly sympathises with the defeated on that occasion, but however much we may sympathise with the oppressed, we cannot blame a

* *Bamff Charters*, p. 269.

soldier for doing his part to crush an insurrection. The blame and shame lay with the government, not with him, and that not for quelling the rising, but for giving such grievous cause for it.

James Rattray would of course have his home, not at the present mansion of Rannagulzion, which was formerly West Drimmie, but at the farm of that name, where there was quite a village, and where the situation just below the shoulder of Drumdearg suits the meaning of the word very well—"Field of the shoulder." James Rattray, though described as "of Rannagullon," was really "fiar of Rannagullon," for his father, the laird, was still alive. His mother was a sister of Sir Gilbert Ramsay.

If we may be allowed to judge merely by the hint that John Robertson had formerly been an elder in Kirkmichael, we may perhaps decide that he was the same as a certain John Robertson in Wester Bleaton, brother to the laird of Middle Dounie. If so, his mother was a sister of Sir Gilbert Ramsay, and he married in 1661 a sister of James Rattray, his fellow elder. In 1672 John Robertson parted with Tullymurdoch to a Mr. Gilbert Ramsay of Bruceton.

David Ramsay of Balharrie married in 1657 his kinswoman, Margaret, the eldest daughter of Sir Gilbert Ramsay. Balharrie was then a much smaller estate than now, but David Ramsay was also laird of "Jurdanstown," as may be gathered from an April Minute of the same year.

James Sowtor was one of the notaries carrying on

business at Alyth at that time. We shall hear of him again, as we shall doubtless hear of most of the other elders.

There were further additions to the Session ere long. In 1672 (November 17) William Ramsay, "Bylzie," was chosen to be an elder. The Bailie would be useful for exacting penalties! In its appropriate place I give grounds for believing that the coat of arms upon the old bridge is his.

A couple of weeks later "John Steell in leitvie" was elected elder, and in 1674 (August 9) a Thomas Clesson undertook the duty—all promising to be faithful in their charge.

So far as I have noted, no more elders were appointed in the period covered by this volume of Minutes; but associated with them were many deacons.

At the present time we have no deacons in Alyth Parish Church, and they are not very common under that name in the Church of Scotland, though in the numerous Quoad Sacra Parishes the managers fulfil the function of deacons with some additional power. But in the old days when there was no poor-rate, and when its place was occupied by the Church collections, wherever there was a large population with many poor, it was necessary either that the Kirk Session should be very large, or that the elders should have the help of the deacons "to receave and distribut the haill ecclesiastical guids unto thame to quhom they are appoyntit" (*Second Book of Discipline*). In the period

of our old Session Book, there were in Alyth far more deacons than elders.

Nominated usually on the one Sunday, they were received on the next, and promised, with uplifted hand, to be faithful in their duties. In consequence of this simplicity of appointment, it was quite common to choose a single deacon at a time, and in 1674, on each of three successive Sundays, one was admitted by the Session. Sometimes two were chosen on the same day, and only twice in the volume is there record of a group being appointed at once, owing to many vacancies by death and removals out of this "Pariochin." One of these—the Minute of April 22, 1677—may be quoted since it shows with unusual fullness and detail the whole process of their appointment. "Those deacons formerly lited . . . were This day elected and chosen to the charge of deaconship and being desired to compeir before the session were called and compeired personally every one of them, and were content to embrace the said charge and the minister enquiring and asking the Session particularly if they kneu any thing against those persons vhy they may not be admitted to be members of the Session all ansueared negatively and so the minister having holden out ther dutics in discharging ther office they promised faithfulnes therin according to their pour with uplifted hands."

Locally, old family names are interesting, and, as in certain cases family tradition may enable some of the present day people of Alyth to link themselves

with the deacons of the seventeenth century, their names, in so far as they are found in the book, are here appended:—David Steeil, Jon Smythe, Tho. Makie, Adam Thomson, Wm. Hunter, Jon Mencur, Pat Crokat, Tho. Findla, David Fenton, Alex. Sowtor, James Neving, John Philp (in Shangie), Tho. Smythe (in Balloche), John Rattray (in Bothrie), Tho. Makie (in the Moortown), David Mencur (in Tillemurdo), John Bruce (in Rannagullon), Alexr Melvill (in Kingseat), John Robertson, Georg Nicoll (sometimes "Nuckle") in Jurdanstown, John Rattray of Borland, Jon Adamson, and Robert Anderson, Andro Heron, James Miller, Patrik Steel (in Ballandoche), Thomas Cargil, Silvester Rattray, James Thomson, Thomas Johnston, Wm. Monerief, Thom. Miller, Alexr Soutor, John Rattray, John Smith, James Turnbull, John Adam (in Blaklunnans), Alex. Huntar, and Hendric Steill, James Crokat, John Wright, Thomas Smithe (in Corb), and Robert Baxter (in hill of halyeards), William Mathow, merchant (who brought home from Edinburgh our second oldest Communion cups), James Cargill, Andro Kid, David Henderson, Thomas Hill, David Melvin, William Chalmiers, Patrick Irland, and Patrick Alexander.

The deacons were chosen by the Session, they appeared before the Session to accept office, and they were simply the servants of the Session. There was no such thing then known as a deacons' court. But though they had no legal voice in the Session's decisions, the deacons were called to consult with the

Session on the financial affairs with which their office dealt, and in consequence were named "Deacons of Session" and even "Members of Session," and there are instances in the book of an informal use being made of them outside their functions, as when the minister with the Session Clerk and a deacon from Bamff went to investigate a case in a cotterman's house on the farm of Watersheil.

This tendency to blend the functions of the elders and the deacons was very natural in all the circumstances of the situation, and must have been very common. In the prior Presbyterian period it shewed itself even in the election of ministers. The vote of the deacons of Meigle was allowed on October 7, 1660, in the election of a minister there, because, according to two ministers appointed to moderate, "the act of the General Assemblie spoke of the Sessions electing, and deacons were members of the Session, and, it was for ought they knew the ordinarie practice of this kirk and of the presbiterie to admitt all the members of the Session to vote in such cases." In view of such a marked tendency, we are not surprised that the order of deacons ultimately became extinct in most parts of the Church of Scotland.

# THE SESSION CLERK.

Mr. Thomas Irland was Session Clerk during the whole period covered by the Minutes we are now studying. He became a student of St. Salvator's College, St. Andrews, on February 12, 1640, and received the Master of Arts degree in 1643. At the end of the same year he was appointed schoolmaster of Alyth, and, as usual, one of his other offices was that of Clerk to the Session.

There were Irlands in the parish already—there were Irlands in "Foyale"—but there is nothing to shew whether he was related to them, and it adds nothing to the likelihood that facing Fyal was Wester Whiteside, where in 1646 he found a wife. Her name was Isobel Rattray, and Patrick Rattray, her father, was a notary public. There is an unwonted confusion in the date of the proclamation of their marriage, but the next entry is that of October 4, which tells that he "vas suspendit from hes office in being clark to the session." Whether this suspension was temporary or nominal, or whether a successor could not be found, his handwriting continued to appear in the Session Minutes, and he still remained schoolmaster, for in 1649 he got his "yearlie pension" as such, which is stated to be "4 dollores." But on

December 28, 1651, he "dimitted the schooll upon ther conditions . . . " one of which was the custody of the Session books till the end of March or until he was fully paid. It was not before November 20, 1653, however, that he wrote his last Minute, on the arrival of his successor, Mr. William Dalgarno, who was afterwards, it is probable, Episcopal "curate" in Mauchline. Next year Mr. Thomas Irland was still in the neighbourhood, and got three pounds for his services at the Communion, whatever these may have been, and in 1655 he became Clerk and schoolmaster at Kettins.

In May, 1661, upon the demission of the third schoolmaster since he left, he was nominated to his old position in Alyth, and was promised a salary of eighty pounds yearly from the heritors and occupiers according to the Act of Parliament, and all the customary perquisites as Session Clerk. On the first Sunday after his return, with a caution that bespoke much experience, he "desired that the casualities belonging to him as reder and clerk to the session" should be inserted in the Minutes, and, since these would mostly remain the same till the end of his career, they may well be given here:—

(1) Baptisms, 6 sh.
(2) Testimonials (*i.e.*, "Lines"), 3 sh 4d.
(3) Proclamations, 18 sh.
(4) Marriage Testimonials, 4 sh.
(5) Burials of Parishioners in the church, 13 sh 4d.

(6) Burials of non-parishioners in the church, 26 sh 8d.

(7) Burials of non-parishioners in the churchyard, 13 sh 4d.

(8) An unstated part of every penalty, and

(9) Out of the box, 20 pounds.

From our Session Minutes we gather hints of the occasional difficulty the Clerk had in obtaining possession of some of these fees, but naturally there is record in them of the payment of the twenty pounds of yearly salary alone. And if that salary was doubtless always paid, it was often paid very much behind time.

Ten years after their return to Alyth, he and his wife acquired three Scots acres of land with houses, erections, yards, and tofts, which had been his father-in-law's for twenty years, and before that had been occupied by Janet Crockat and Robert Milne. And apparently the worthy couple had the pleasure of having the Latin deed of confirmation written out by their son Patrick, who was servitor to Thomas Whitson, notary public. It is now in possession of Mr. Low, The Losset.

It is interesting to Alyth people to find in this deed proof that somewhere after passing under the Old Bridge, the Alyth Burn must have run in a different channel from the present, and therefore one more to the west. It may have circled round the other side of Mornity, but in any case it must have been on the

other side of Cairnleith and the lands of Cairnleith. For it is never mentioned in defining the boundaries of Mr. Thomas Irland's property, and yet his first acre in the field called "the buttis," of which the last remaining open space is the Bleaching Green, was bounded on the south and west by the lands of Cairnleith, occupied by William Brown, Robert Moncur, William Scoone, and George Henderson.

The other two acres were in the field called the Losset —a very familiar name to this day, and a rather common and appropriate Gaelic name for a piece of fat land, seeing it means a kneading trough. They were bounded on the north by the road then called the Lossetgeat, and on the east by the lands of Burnside.

Though so long Session Clerk and Reader in the church, Mr. Thomas Irland was never an elder or a deacon, but no doubt his knowledge and advice would be often of as much use in the Session as if he had.

From the fine, clear writing and careful style of Mr. Thomas Irland's Minutes, one quickly forms a highly favourable opinion of his character. And when about six months after the death of the minister, and coincidently with the induction of his successor, the Minutes suddenly appear in another hand, less precise and somewhat more modern, one fears one has parted from an honoured friend; and it is with a melancholy feeling that almost two years later, on April 29, 1688, one reads: "the Laird of Bamph, Mr James Ogilvy of Clunie, and David Graham of Jordanstan and William Henderson of Halyards, came to the Session

and desird that Mr Thomas Irland, schoolmaster, being unable to attend his charge should demitt, and they promised that he should have an hundreth pounds given to him presentlie, and twentie pounds during his life, upon which the forsaid Mr Thomas Irland promised at Whitsunday next to give over his charge."

The final Minute of the volume (except for a few pages of compressed notes) describes his demission by handing over the book in the presence of the Heritors and the Session, and the appointment of his successor, Mr. James Guthrie, schoolmaster, from Eassie. And thus dramatically and regretfully we take farewell of the old man who wrote the records so fully and so well, and who must have left a lasting effect upon Alyth.

# THE BIBLE.

In some of our churches the pulpit Bibles of long ago are among the most cherished possessions of to-day; but partly from a lack of imagination, partly from the feeling that it was the water of life and not the channel which was glorious, and more than all from the custom of presenting a pulpit Bible to each new minister to be his own, the unfortunate result has been that in most of our churches none of the disused copies are left. We in Alyth are not quite so bad as we might have been, for in the cabinet within the Session House there is an edition printed in 1793, and bound with metrical psalms of 1795—an edition which might have been used by Mr. Symers; but this is comparatively modern, and we should fain hope that others of older date had survived, not least the two mentioned in 1669 and 1674-5.

As part of the ceremony of induction, the Bible with the keys of the church door was presented to Mr. Thomas Robertson in 1669, and we may doubtless infer from the wording of the presentation that the Bible, quite as little as the keys of the church, was intended to become the heritable property of the new minister; yet we are prevented from inferring that it belonged to the church by the terms of another Minute five years later: "This day [September 13, 1674] the

minister proposed to the session the needfulnes and conveniency of a church bible the session did unanimously approve the motion, and did intreat the minister to use his moyon to buy an good one and for that end desired that vho were oun any thing to the church wil speedely bring it in."

The old Bible may have been well worn, or it may have been of an antiquated version, but seemingly it was private property—the property no doubt of the senior minister, and a "church bible" was wanted.

Two months later, "the minister reports that according to the desire of the session he hes bespoken a friend of his who hes promised to buy him a good bible owt of Holland." One might at first imagine from this recourse to the Continent that the version sought was a "Breeches" Bible, which was brought out by English refugees in Geneva in 1560, and which retained its popularity in this country long after the publication of our "Authorised Version." But there was no later edition of this Genevan version than 1616, and though a copy might possibly have been in use up to 1674 in Alyth Parish Church, a new one could hardly have been sought or obtained so late, we should imagine. And as the version we still use was published not merely in London but in Amsterdam also, we may with fair confidence decide for it.

Another couple of months had to pass before the Bible expected "owt of Holland" was heard of; but on January 24, 1675, it was minuted that "This day the bible for the use of the churche befor mentiond was

produced to the session. The price thereof was
the session was weel satisfied therwithe and ordained a false skin to be put upon, and a door to be put upon the Latron to keep it secure." The vacant space left for the price was never filled in, but it is added that the cost of bringing the book from Dundee was six shillings, and two months later we learn the cost of the "false skin" when there was "given to William Watson glover for a cover to the bible 13 shll."

A member of the church has a fine blackletter quarto copy of the Genevan or "Brecches" Bible inherited from remote ancestors, who hailed, as far back as is known, from Balhary. It was printed not on the Continent, however, but in London in 1616, and is bound with Sternhold and Hopkins' metrical version of the psalms (including a number of tunes) of date 1618. This copy would have an additional sentimental value for us if it could be shewn to have been once used in conducting the services of the church of Alyth; but if the arguments already adduced are correct, it is little likely to be the one got in 1675; and though it may be identical with the one used immediately prior to that time, certainly is not attainable. Even if it were a minister's Bible, it need not have belonged to an Alyth minister, though the connection with Balhary does suggest some relation to Mr. Thomas Robertson, who bought part of Balhary, then a small estate much subdivided; so our regret for the absence of the old "church bible" of 1675 is not tempered by the certain discovery of an older.

This "church bible" was apparently for the use of the reader in the "latron," but it might also have been employed by the minister in the pulpit, since the reading of the Scriptures, which lasted half an hour, was over before the minister came into the church. Thereafter the reader acted as precentor merely, and accordingly the beadle might quite well have transferred the "church bible" up to the pulpit when ushering in the minister, so as to be useful for reference during the course of the sermon or of the catechising, restoring it to the "latron" afterwards to be ready for the next Sunday.

Be that as it may, there are a number of casual references to the position of the Scripture lessons in the service, the clearest being the form of Minute which for half a year in 1671 was the favourite: "after reading Mr John preatched" or "after reading Mr Thomas preatched". But it is only at the end of 1685 one can with certainty infer the presence of an official reader who was not the minister himself: (November 15.) "No session nor preaching this day but reading, becawse owr minister uas sick"; (November 22.) "No preaching this day but reading becawse of owr minister his deathe." And thereafter in the absence of a minister on several occasions during the vacancy the Sunday's Minute is simply "No preaching but reading." It is rather curious that, though the texts are regularly recorded, the Scriptures read are given only once—August 6, 1671: "This being a fasting day and after reading of the 51 psal. 58 of

Isaia. 2 of Joell. 2 of Jona, Mr Jon preatched 13 of Luke, 2-3-4".

Neither the presence of the reader nor the place in which he performed his office had anything to do with Presbyterianism or Episcopacy. The difference in those days in Scotland between the two services was very trifling. The usage and the office had come down from the Reformation, when there were not enough ministers to go round. In the apparent absence of any regular minister, Lorence Duncane was reader for Alyth and Ruthven in 1567. The reader, precentor, and Session Clerk, during the period under review at present was as usual the schoolmaster of the parish, then Mr. Thomas Irland; and into his charge would be committed the "church bible" bought out of Holland in 1675, whose loss we so greatly regret.

# THE SERVICES.

In our modern Session Minutes there is nothing at all about any ordinary church service, except perhaps a change in the hour at which it is to be held, or some collection beyond use and wont to be made at it; and the only reference to a special service is under cover of the special collection, if any. But in our old volume we are told week by week what services there were, who conducted them, what was the minister's text or texts, what special intimations he made, how much was collected, and for what purpose. There is thus a good deal of unexpected information, and, as the special services link us more directly with the wider history of the day, we shall deal with them first.

The first relative instance is in 1671, when "Mr Thomas . . . did intimat to the congregation that he was to preatche the morrow the 29 of may, according to the general order and custom of the kingdom concerning the restutition of the king." The attendance on that Monday to celebrate the eleventh anniversary of the Restoration seems to have been small, if one can judge by the collection, which was eleven shillings, whereas it was twenty-two shillings on the Sunday. In the following year "the anniversarie" must have been attended by less or less generous people, for the collection was nine

shillings, as against twenty-three shillings on the Sunday before. In the years following no collection was made, but the service was held regularly on the 29th of May except when the date fell on a Saturday or a Sunday, and, once "becawse of the minister's distemper," and a second time, nine years later, because his successor was in process of being inducted. The recorded texts used by the preachers were appropriate and loyal, as those who look them up will find: Psalm cxlii. (twice running), Exodus ii. 25, Proverbs xxiv. 21, Acts vii. 34-35, Psalm xxix., Psalm iii., James v. 13, Proverbs xvii. 11 (twice: different ministers), Daniel vi., Psalm ci., I. Chronicles xxix. 18. This last text is remarkable in shewing the vanity of human hope and perhaps of human expectation. It was used three years after the death of Charles II. for a "sermon in remembrance of our late king's restauration" by Mr. John Lousone, who succeeded Mr. Thomas Robertson in the ministry of Alyth. It evidently expressed the hope that the Restoration service would continue to be held for ever, while as a matter of fact it was never held again, for William of Orange landed the same year, and the minister himself was in the year following deprived of his parish for clinging tenaciously to the fugitive king, James II. or VII.

After the accession of James in 1685, services were held by order on the King's Birthday (October 14) as well as on Restoration Day, which had been coincidently King Charles' birthday. The recorded

texts were Numbers x. 35-36, Proverbs xxiv. 21, Psalm lxxxii. 6-7.

On February 12, 1688, "there was Intimation made this day from the pulpit of a thanksgiving to be kept the next Lord's day for the queen's conception." The birth thus thankfully anticipated was that of the "Chevalier de St George," otherwise known as "The Old Pretender," born on the 10th of June that same year, from which date as it happens there is a blank in the Session Records, followed by brief notes belonging to the next decade.

Interesting historically are the references to three National Fasts and to two National Thanksgivings.

On the third Sunday of December, 1678, "The minister mad intimation of the general fast to be keep throwowt the kingdom the thrid wednesday of december concerning the king's preservation from the popish conspiracie and read the causes thereof and desir'd the congregation to meet frequently to attend the sermon the said day." The congregation accordingly met "frequently," *i.e.*, as a body or in full numbers—in such full numbers indeed that the collection amounted to forty shillings, whereas on the Sunday it was only twenty-three shillings. This was a marked contrast to the lack of interest shewn in Restoration Day, and this is one among many proofs that even those who tamely submitted to the loss of civil and religious liberty and made no protest against the persecution of the Covenanters, whose hatred of the tyranically imposed Episcopal government of the Church was

chiefly due to their just conviction that Prelacy was meant by the Court to be the warming pan for Popery, were yet themselves ardently Protestant, and ready in the future to accept a revolution to secure their Protestantism. It is a pity, however, that the occasion of their ardour in 1678 was merely the trumped up tales of Titus Oates.

Much less interest—if we may take the collection as a just criterion—was shewn in the Thanksgiving appointed by King Charles for the discovery of the Rye House Plot, and duly intimated. On Sabbath, September 9, 1683, "the minister preached the thanksgiving sermons for the kings delivrie owt of uiked mens plotts (after he had read the declaration thereof)". The collection was twenty-four shillings, which was considerably below the average of the other Sundays till the dead of Winter.

There was no collection and, therefore, there is no means of gauging the public feeling and attitude towards the next and last Thanksgiving. "Thursday 13 of august 85, this being a general day of thanksgiving for the defat of the kings enemies, the minister preached upon 64 psal at 9."

The enemies referred to in this notice were the Marquis of Argyll and the Duke of Monmouth, with their respective followers, who in the darkest hour before the dawn of religious liberty had made an armed descent upon Scotland and England, had been defeated and had been beheaded, Argyll on June 30 and Monmouth on July 15, 1685.

Two fasts on aeeount of the weather remain to be noted—those of June 29, 1681, and of May 7, 1684. Taking the colleetions as a test, we pereeive that the people were mueh moved by the drought and threatened dearth, and eame to the ehureh in erowds; for at the first was eollected four pounds four shillings, and at the seeond four pounds. The texts suited the oeeasions well: "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and mereiful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God?" (Joel ii. 13-14) and "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah xxvi. 9).

So far as my observation goes, there are no other referenees in the book to serviees bringing us into toueh with the wider history of the day; but these are suffieient to make us realise how the life of the great world throbbed through Alyth long ago.

The ordinary serviees of the Lord's Day were two during the greater part of the year; but from November to February (inelusive) there was only one, and the very eonsiderable variations in beginning and ending the period of the single serviee prove that more attention was paid to the weather than to the calendar in fixing the dates.

This rule was kept carefully during Mr. Thomas Robertson's ministry of sixteen years. On two occasions only the first service was included in the second—because the minister was at Ruthven in the forenoon. Doubtless he was helping with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, for it was on August 1 in the one year and July 29 in the other. Occasionally there was no second service when there should have been one—"in respect of the fowlnes of the weather," or "in respect the minister was not weel in health," or because he had a baby both born and baptised that day, or because he had to hasten to the deathbed of Lady Airlie, or because he had to repay a Communion service, or had to help his brother-in-law at Rattray—once (February 18, 1683) because of the death of his sister-in-law there.

The rule, if rule we may call it, was badly kept by Mr. John Lousone, who was not nearly so diligent as his predecessor. Within his short ministry he had on one occasion no regular service at all (though the blame for that fell rather on the bishop than on himself); and after being only two weeks inducted he dropped the second service, although it was but the middle of June, and did not resume it for nine months. It must be added, however, that next year (1687), though he stopped the second service in the middle of October, he resumed it in the middle of December, and kept it on thereafter with few exceptions till the middle of June, when the Session book ends.

The second service, when there was one, was held always in the afternoon, but the hour is nowhere stated.

Neither is the hour stated at which the ordinary morning service began; but in announcing a pre-communion Sunday fast, the people were required to assemble sooner than their custom "and that be 10 howrs peremtorlie." May we not infer that the ordinary morning service began about a quarter-past ten or half-past ten?—not very promptly to the hour, perhaps, because the sundial could not always be read at the homes of the people, and punctuality to a greater extent than now would be the thief of time.

The period of the year for the double service, the part of the day for holding the second, and the hour for beginning the first are all strange to us. Our brilliant artificial lights and comfortable heating of churches have made our habits in these respects very different from theirs. At the present time, the regular double service, if not held all the year round, is preferred in the dark cold days from the end of September till May, when people are less tempted to prefer the pleasant open-air; and the second service, when it is held, is preferred as late in the day as six o'clock or half-past, to break the monotony of a long evening, whereas theirs had to be held in the afternoon so as to catch the daylight. And then there was a meeting of Session to be held after the services, and after that the catechising. It was, therefore, desirable that the morning service should be early, so they held it at an hour which we have at length re-

attained in a strict sense by the expedient of putting the clock forward an hour.

Of the texts from which the ministers preached at that period we have a complete record, and these dispose of the prevailing idea that there was at that time a greater fondness for texts taken from the Old Testament than from the New. There may possibly be evidence of such a tendency in those parts of the country which were downtrodden with armed men, just as now many parts of the Old Testament dealing with affairs have a new suitability and interest for us in this great world War. But even in downtrodden parts the general habit and custom cannot be rightly inferred from the texts of special sermons. Yet whatever may have been the case elsewhere, in Alyth there was no such preponderance of Old Testament texts as has been asserted. In his last few years, Mr. John Rattray preached about 170 times, and his texts were from the Old Testament on only seventeen occasions. Mr. Thomas Robertson preached 462 times, more or less, from Old Testament texts, and about 658 times from New Testament texts. And Mr. John Lousone, out of, say, 122 sermons, had New Testament texts eighty-three times.

Of the three, Mr. Thomas Robertson had the largest proportion of Old Testament texts, although the New Testament had a sweeping majority even in his case. We get a wrong impression of him in this respect from the early pages of the Minute Book, and also when we turn over to the end of his career to see how the story

is to finish. For a considerable while after being inducted, his texts, with few exceptions, were from the Old Testament, and we begin to think the fierceness of the time was perhaps embodied in him, when suddenly and for years he has scarcely a text except from the New Testament. In view of this fact, we naturally ask ourselves whether there could be any commoner explanation of his early choice. A young preacher who has scarcely found his own feet, and who is uncertain where his people stand, may seek to save himself from the difficulties of delicate doctrinal subjects to some extent by a free selection of Old Testament texts. He may discuss these same difficult subjects if he likes, but he is not forced to do so; nor is he forced to go so fully into the matter even when he does not shirk it. But Mr. Thomas Robertson was no longer newly fledged when he came to Alyth. However, he may have had a certain timidity in plunging at once into doctrinal teaching in presence of an old and experienced colleague. Or just because the old minister was preaching from the New Testament he may have chosen the Old.

But whatever be the explanation of Mr. Thomas Robertson's early choice, and whatever that choice may imply in the movement of his own thought, the explanation of his continuing therein may be found not necessarily in any preference for the Old Testament view of God and man, but in the custom then rife of preaching week after week from the same verse and then moving on merely to the next.

In more modern days, advice has sometimes been given, in a chestnut, to a young preacher to take a good long text, and then when he is persecuted in one verse to flee to the next. Such a plan was unknown to the ministers of Alyth in the late seventeenth century. Week after week they would discourse on the same text, and the Clerk, in order to spare his memory, would often say that the minister preached "on his foirsaid text," or "on his text foirsaid," or "on the psalm and verse foirsaid," or "on his former text," or "on his said text," or "on his ordinar text." When that was finished, the next verse would be the subject, and so on and on. This practice accounts for the large number of Old Testament texts at the beginning of Mr. Thomas Robertson's ministry, after he had started with one or two. He began with four sermons on Ecclesiastes vii. 29, "God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Then followed seven sermons on Job xiv. 4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." His third subject was Psalm lxxviii. One sermon was given to the whole Psalm, then he had four sermons on verse 22, "Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation"; sixteen on verse 32, "For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works"; six on verse 34, "When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God"; and three on verse 36, "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues." There-

after, a pre-communion sermon on Lamentations iii. 22 broke the spell and led on to a couple of months of the New Testament, with a return to the Psalms—this time to Psalm lxxiii., upon a few verses of which he preached seventy-three sermons, with now and then a subject thrown in from elsewhere. This accounts for the great mass of Mr. Thomas Robertson's Old Testament texts in his earlier ministry.

In his later years there was a recurrence to these, but again it was to his favourite Book of Psalms. From March, 1681, till July 1685, his afternoon work was a course of sermons on this book, one psalm one sermon from Psalm i. to Psalm cxix., which, of course, he was obliged to divide into each of its sections. With that stage of his progress, he seems to have exhausted his subject or his people's patience, or both.

In these later years, other Old Testament courses were sixty sermons on Job, chapters i. and ii.—only thirteen being on chapter ii.; seven sermons on Daniel vi. 21-22, "Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt"; six on Ecclesiastes viii. 11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil"; fourteen on Job xix. 25-26, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin

worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"; ten on Habakkuk iii. 16-18, "When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation"; and six on Joshua i. 8, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." His last sermon chanced to be on Cain and Abel (Genesis iv.).

Yet, after all, no great degree of insight may necessarily be gained into a man's thoughts by his habit of choosing Old Testament texts. A step towards the individual worth and responsibility of the human soul characteristic of the Gospel is no doubt taken by Ezekiel—to select that book as an instance—but the Gospel may be found in Ezekiel to any amount if we put it in. And so with other Old Testament books.

It may be asked, What were Mr. Thomas Robertson's favourite themes from the New Testament?

Well, after one or two scattered texts, used once or

twice, or at most thrice, his first thorough New Testament subject was Luke xii. 48, "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." On this text he preached nine times, and then three times on Luke xii. 28, "If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?" The next subject was the grand chapter xv. of St. Luke, which he approached with all the deliberation of an ancient siege in no less than 161 sermons, almost without intermission. Thereafter, beginning in August, 1675, and ending in December, 1679, he went carefully over the whole Epistle of James, preaching from it no less than 300 times. After that, his subjects were on a few passages in the Acts thirty-five times. His next New Testament course of twenty-two sermons on the Beatitudes preceded and accompanied the first part of the long course on the separate psalms.

It is not to be inferred that these courses of sermons were wholly without interruption, except by the coming of a stranger to the pulpit, for occasionally most of them were broken in upon, perhaps for mere variety, or before, during, and after communions, when the series could not properly afford a fitting subject.

The practice of preaching again and again on one text was in no way peculiar to Mr. Thomas Robertson.

His predecessor, towards the close of his active ministry, preached seventy-six times on texts taken from the Epistle to the Philippians, and his successor, with less tenacity, followed the same plan. Even expectants coming to conduct the services for a day would preach both morning and afternoon on the same text, and coming back another day some time after would take it up again.

In view of the long series of Sundays spent over a very few texts, we need not be surprised that there are many books of the Scriptures from which not one was taken during the whole couple of decades; but if we may permit ourselves such a feeling, perhaps there is some element of surprise in the total omission of St. Mark's Gospel by all three ministers.

The peculiar habit of preaching so often on a single text, and then moving on to the allied thoughts lying nearest, may prove a special thoroughness in the preaching of the day; but it may as well tend to shew that, whatever the text, it must have been very largely a starting-post for a race which the runner took in any direction he chose, or—to use a common and a better figure—a spring-board for a plunge into the great ocean of Christian doctrine and things in general.

The decorum and solemnity of the services would be marred sometimes by the presence of the delinquents in the stool of repentance, but custom would stale even such thrills; and beyond and above them the only sensation seems to have been that of May 13, 1677: "John makie and Ewphain herill being proclamed

this day for the seeond time upon purpose of mariage there was objection made against there proeeedings by one Elspet Androw who in the face of the congregatione stood up hearing them proclamed and said she knew impediment alledging that she had a promise of mariage made to hir be John makie wherfor she being desired to eompeir befor the sessione compeired and affirmed that she wold prove vhat she spake be witneses whilk she cowld not doe therefor ordor was given to proceed with the proclamation."

The foregoing account of our services two and a half centuries ago is supplemented ineidentally elsewhere, and will naturally be followed by some details of the eatechising, whieh in part at least was eonducted in the ehureh on the Lord's Day, and might therefore be almost deseribed as one of the services.

# THE CATECHISING.

THERE are numbers still living in Alyth who remember the parish minister coming round once a year, or thereby, to hold a service from house to house and to catechise the members of each family, but not even a tradition remains, so far as I have been able to discover, of the custom of catechising the parishioners in the church. Traditions there are here of such practices in other districts, particularly in Tannadice, all of them quaint or humorous, else they would not have survived; but a solemn and proper dignity seems to have been preserved in Alyth, at least as far back as traditionary anecdotes go, for though there are no such recollections, the catechising in church that was of old required by the Church Authorities was duly carried out here as elsewhere. Mr. John Rattray's practice must be sought in the volume prior to that under review, but he had grown old and deaf, and, after the appointment of Mr. Thomas Robertson to be his "colleague and helper," though he did not cease preaching, he very seldom catechised. Nor did Mr. Robertson begin this rather delicate work without allowing himself plenty of time to get acquainted with his people. Half a year after his ordination, on the first Sunday of March, 1670, "The minister did intimat that the cowrse of examination was to begin, and that the half of over-moortoons was to be examined the nixt Sabt after

preatcheing," and week by week it was kept up till the Communion at the end of July, without any further mention of the particular districts or persons catechised except on the 17th of April, when there was "no session this day becawse my laday airlie was waiting upon the examination to be after sermons qlk was had by Mr Thomas." The impartiality which required her presence did not go so far as to keep her waiting.

It is interesting to note that while the necessity of excusing the neglect of a meeting of Session has been the means of recording Her Ladyship's presence in the church that day—a presence which might have been detected also in the collection—the same reason provides a record of her presence in the parish on March 30, 1679, on which day there was "no session becawse our minister was send for to visitat my Lady Airly who was extreame sick." On April 30, 1682, there was "no preatching afternoon becaws the minister is send for to see and visit my laday airlie Like to die."

This Lady Airlie must of course have been resident in the parish of Alyth, and probably at Balloch—the one nearest Loyal Hill—which came into the possession of the family in 1635, and at which there was a "tower" and a "manor place." The foundations of the tower are below the present mill-shed, and very likely it is the foundations of the manor dovecot which are still to be seen at the "duckety well," a little farther up, on the other side of the road. The Castles of Airlie and Forter had been burnt in 1640, and the side taken in the troublous politics of the period by the

House of Airlie had considerably diminished the family fortunes, so the residence at the modest manor of Balloch is accounted for; but it is not certain which Lady Airlie may have dwelt there in 1670. Lord Ogilvy, the heir to the Earldom, and his first wife, who was the real heroine of the incident mentioned in the ballad of "The Bonnie House o' Airlie," would seem to have been at Balloch in 1650, for in that year their daughter Elizabeth was baptised in Alyth, and also in 1651 when he qualified for military command in the Royal Covenanting war against Cromwell by professing repentance in the church, "to the full satisfactione of the wholl congregation." * It may be that he and his second wife—now Earl and Countess of Airlie—may have been for a time there in 1670. Her initials with those of her husband on the old Alyth Cross stone of 1670 may be no proof of actual residence within the parish at that date, but neither are they any proof to the contrary. Now this lady was the widow of the Marquess of Huntly when, in 1668, she married Lord Airlie, and having been a Roman Catholic and excommunicated as such, she may, after her reconciliation with the Church of Scotland, have had to be catechised two years later in Alyth. This theory is attractive, but it cannot in itself settle the point at issue, for the catechising of the parish was being held in due course, and it was not confined to the young, as might be imagined. In agreement with the laws of the Church, one of the rules laid down for Alyth

* See page 20.

and elsewhere in 1649 by "The Visitors of the Province of Angus and Mearns," was "that all persons in the parochie above 8 years of adge be catechised," and if that were not enough, our volume of records itself amply testifies to the observance in Alyth of the regular rule that no one could partake of the Communion without having been catechised in the course of the year. This is proved by such a Minute as that of July 29, 1677, when the minister "did intimat that the Comunion, god willing, was to be given this day fortnight and shew that he was to examin every day this week and desired these that are not examined to come to him any day of this week." No one was to be excluded from the Lord's Table for want of an opportunity of being catechised. Accordingly, the mere catechising of a Lady Airlie in 1670, when every communicant had to be examined, is no proof that she was catechised because she had for a time been a Roman Catholic. A Dowager Lady Airlie, if there was one at that time, would therefore be equally well indicated, and indeed better, since, despite the burning of Airlie and Forter Castles, the manor of Balloch was still merely a secondary possession and not the regular residence of the Earl. Now the only possible dowager was the other lady's mother-in-law, who was alive at her husband's death in 1664, but for how long after is quite unknown. She was alive, however, in 1670, as the Session Clerk's Deed of Confirmation already quoted clearly shows, and it may be that in our Session Minutes we have stumbled across the date

of her death. If the Lady Airlie who was "like to die" in 1682 actually did die then, as the terms seem to imply, we have discovered a lost fact, namely, that the widow of the first Earl died in that year, having lived till she was eighty-six. On the whole, it seems probable that this was the Lady Airlie who came to the church in 1670 to be examined by the new minister.

Though Mr. Thomas Robertson allowed the winter to be past before beginning his first course of catechising, his custom in future years was merely to give it a rest for two or three months after the Communion, and to start at the beginning of November, when the afternoon service was given up for the winter. It was kept on thereafter, as the 1670 October intimation shews, "evrie sabt after sermon at the ringing of the bell"—this no doubt because the customary meeting of Session after the service would be of uncertain duration. Nor did the resuming of the afternoon service in spring make any difference to the catechising, which, as formerly said, continued till the yearly Communion, a second course being begun near the Communion time for those who had been omitted in the first round.

The inhabitants of "the Moortown" district, which would extend from the Alyth Burn past Hill of Muirton (Johnshill) to the Temple Lands of Bothrie (Cairns), were always first called, or rather the half of the inhabitants, as is usually indicated in the notice: to expect the whole of the "examinable persons" of a district to appear at church on one day would have been out of the question. For the first five years we

get no other indication of the places in the parish or of the direction in which they were gone round except that Bothrie, or even Bothrie and Bardmony, were sometimes united with "the Moortowns" in the first notice; but from this we gather a hint—afterwards confirmed in detail—that the direction of the call was against the sun, or "widdershins" as it is named in some parts of the country. And this shews that the old prejudice against going widdershins did not count in the catechising, or else that the order taken was meant deliberately to flout the prejudice. It was certainly made a point of virtue by the Church to do things of that sort in those old days.

During the five years in which so few details are given, except merely that the minister examined "after sermon," or "thereafter" or "afternoon," the reasons for omission are faithfully recorded; and a remarkable series of these occurred in the spring of 1674. On February 1, there was "no examination this day in respect of the stormines of the weather"; on February 22, "no examination in respect of extrem cold"; on March 1, "no examination because of the stormie day"; on March 8, "no examination afternoon in respect of great cold." Thus our records bear witness to a memorable stormy period. Chambers, in *The Domestic Annals of Scotland*, tells that the frost began in January and did not break up till the 29th of March, that very heavy snow fell on the 20th February, and that this was followed by the long recollected "Thirteen Drifty Days."

In 1675 Mr. Robertson tried a new plan. On March 14, there was "no examining to be afternoon for the minister did intimat shawing that he was to examin and catechyse the people at their own duellings in their severall quarters." Then for a couple of months we find a notice each Sunday of where he had been on "Widnesday last," or on "Thursday last" or on "fridday last," with two or three exceptional examinations in church.

It looks as though the people had disliked the innovation; or else as though the minister had not been at first quite satisfied with the new plan, for from November 7, when he "did intimate that . . . he is to fal on the course of examination" it was all in the church for the year, with the addition of only four weekdays for stated cases. The next course, however, had not gone on very far before "Mr. Thomas . . . . desired the people of litfie to attend the examination to be at there oun toun fridday next" (January 26, 1677), but on the Sunday after he was obliged to announce that "leitfie was not examined on fridday last because the minister was diverted, they are desired yet to wait on fridday next"; and though he was too ill to preach on the following Sunday—probably from some infectious disease, since his wife died within that week—he must have managed to catechise a portion of Leitfie on the Friday (February 2), for on April 15 we read that "In respect the examination was interrupted and hindred this long time by the minister's unwilnes and other distractions

nou resolves to proceed with the more diligence and he desir'd the rest of litfie not formerly examined to attend the examination the morrou at 9 hours and balharrie on wednesday and Jurdingstoun on thursday." Then followed in rapid succession "Halzards," "Auchteralight," "the Quichs," and later "Brucetown" and "Shangie," but to what effect the Minute of June 17 plainly shews: "Mr Thomas preached . . . and examined thereafter and made intimation that because the examinations hes not been accuratly gon about these diverse bygon weeks in respect of the ministers distempers and not in good health for traveling that he is to examin halzards and ballindoch to morrow and on wednesday quichs and caldom with the pendicls on thursday the ballow befor noon and after noon bastard bank and redlakie and the rest of the towns on the brae."

Further particulars of places visited or of their people called to the church to be examined are plentiful in the following years, but it is unnccessary to give details, especially as the plan of mentioning only the most important house of a group has the curious result that scarcely a place is mentioned which does not still exist. Reidlakie, whose site is covered by Loyal House, Bastardbank, at the trees beyond the modern Loyal Farm, and Caldhom, somewhere between Pitcrocknie and Inverqueich, are almost the only exceptions. But it is easy to see by the time taken in these examinations how small was the population of the town and how much greater than now was the population of the

country. Thus it took the full season of 1683-84 to complete the parish, and yet on February 24, 1684, it could be written, "The minister examined the wholl town of Alyght last week." Even more definite is the intimation of March 26, 1676, "that the toun of alight from the bridge upvard to the west quarter to be examined to morou and the rest on wednesday at the ringing of the bell."

Curiously enough, this custom, which is now but a name and hardly even a memory, affects the Alyth of to-day, not merely in the mental fibre of its people but even in the possession of its handsome and commodious church. It was built shortly before the Disruption to contain, according to law, "two thirds of the examinable persons in the parish," which by that time meant two-thirds of the inhabitants above twelve years of age; and though this sometimes loses for us the sense of compactness, it provides a building which is not only worthy of the town but an honour to it, and one which is suited to our needs on all great occasions.

The plan of examining and catechising the people on the principal points of religious knowledge had its day of usefulness in the century or so after the Reformation; but however much we regret the religious ignorance of many at the present time, we must acknowledge that its day is past. The old system of public catechising was a bondage which our fathers bore for long, but which no communicant would now endure.

The Present Parish Church of Alyth, built in 1839.

See page 68.

# THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The ideal of some Christian Churches has been to have the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day, but in the Church of Scotland and those claiming kin with it the analogy of the great Jewish festivals has been more nearly followed, so that solemn reverence may be preserved without superstition. Hence, as a rule, this Sacrament is not dispensed more than three or four times annually, and though to meet the needs of our shifting country population we do well to have at least one celebration each half-year, many country parishes have it only once a year. Nowadays, however, it is never less, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was shamefully neglected by many parishes upon one excuse or another, and if the period 1670 to 1688 is a fair sample, there was neglect in Alyth as elsewhere—though nothing glaring. During these nineteen years, it was omitted in 1673, 1675, and 1686 without recorded explanation or apology, but evidently Mr. Thomas Robertson (the minister) and his Session had not expected any omission in 1686, for an extra pair of Communion Cups, apparently ordered months before, were brought home in that year, and remain to this day in use; but, meanwhile, Mr. Robertson had

died, and his successor must have failed to take steps to have the Sacrament kept in the first months of his ministry.

The omission of the Lord's Supper was the easier in Alyth, inasmuch as there was no set Sunday in the year for the holding of it. It floated about according to convenience in the months of May, June, July, August, and September, with a leaning towards August.

When it was observed, it took place on two succeeding Sundays, and these crowned the year's preaching, visitation, and catechising. The attendant services were held not at the hours, perhaps, yet on the days that are still recalled in the memory of the older folks, except that there was no Fast Day. During the period covered by this book, a "Congregationall Fast" was indeed kept three times—1670, 1671, 1672—but it was kept on the previous "Sabbath" and not on the Thursday. It is not to be assumed, however, that on the "fasting day" there was no difference from the usual Sabbath service, for on July 28, 1672, when intimation was made "that this day eight dayes is appointed to be ane congregationall fast," the people were asked to "convein the shuner nor ther custome is and that be 10 howrs peremtorlie." But whatever form the Fast took, when it took any, there was always a "preparation sermon" on each of the Saturdays before the Communion, the hour being usually twelve, but sometimes eleven or one; and there was always a "thanksgiving sermon" on the Monday after the

second Communion day. The time of this service, so far as recorded, was generally ten o'clock, twice it was eight o'clock, and once "betuixt 9 and 10," which nowadays would mean a service lasting one hour, but which on "Mononday," August 21, 1671, presumably meant that the sermon would be begun sometime during that hour. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the fact that the people were convened for the Lord's Supper on the previous day "betuixt 8 and 9," and by the rather common use of the word "about" in intimating the hour of sermon when there was any departure from the weekly routine. This indefinite tone may imply that the reader would be doing his unannounced part previously, or it may imply leisurely days when clocks were scarce, sand glasses unreliable, sundials often useless, and when punctuality was more a virtue than a necessity.

On Communion days the parishioners gathered for the first sermon "at" nine o'clock or "be" (by) nine o'clock, except in 1671, when they came "be 8 howrs" on the one Sunday and "betuixt 8 and 9" on the next. Only once did the preaching begin "abowt nine howrs."

Of the Sacramental Day's proceedings, the Minute of August 18, 1672, gives a full and yet brief account: "This being the second Communion day Mr Tho. Robertsone preached in the morning upon the 20: Chap: of John: 17: verse and after: 10: Tabells and ane halfe being served Mr John rattray minister at rattray preached afternoon upon the first of Colos: 20: verse."

There would be at least as many tables on the first Communion day, for it had been intimated beforehand "that the halfe of evrie familie shall comunicat the next sabt & the other the saboth following"; but this gives no clue to the number of communicants, for the number accommodated at each table is never given.

The "fencing of the Tables," which is now commonly done after the "action" sermon, when the communicants are actually seated at the Table of the Lord, was then more fittingly done on the previous Sunday, or at the preparation sermon on the Saturday, in some such terms as these: "that no scandalows person; and those that have not browght ther testimonialls from other paroches presume to come to the table the morrow; and those that are at variance with their neighbowrs." In other intimations those were likewise debarred who were "ignorants and who keeped not there dyets of examination at all." Nor were the communicants left to their own judgment on these points, for the elders and deacons were required to "se who hath latlie com to the parochin withowt testimonialls that they bring them and if not delate them," and also "in ther quarters be at som pains to reconcile those that are at varianee, and they that will not be reconciled be delated to the session," and their ordinary duty of delating all persons whose reputations were under scandal was reimpressed; and so sometimes before a Communion there was a great redding up!

The effect of all this upon the spiritual life of the

people must be left to the imagination, but certainly we might well envy these old days their attendance at the Lord's Supper if the attendance had been free and voluntary, for on September 13, 1674, when "the minister did ask the members of the session if they kneu any that did not communicat within their quarters," they "ansueared accordind to their knowledg they kneu non." The same question got the same answer from the elders in 1676, and again in 1679 and 1684 they "ansuered negatively." Scarcely less remarkable was the attendance in the only other years in which the record is given, for in the first only five were absent, and in the second just one. Well might we envy such a magnificent percentage! But when we begin to ask how the result was attained, we must withdraw some of our admiration, for it was not due altogether to religious fervour setting a high value upon the Sacrament. It was attained by inquisitorial care beforehand, and by vigorous methods afterwards. On the 19th of August, 1677, the minister put the usual question, on the 26th "the elders reports that they know none that did not communicat as yet," but on September 9, William Storrar, Robert Gib, Issobel Whyt, Margaret Wast, and Elspet Ramsay were delated as being absent from the Lord's Table, and all ordered to be charged. On the next Sunday, however, they "compeared and gave in there reasonable excuses." Again, in 1678, "William Ramsay in the barronrie of bamf"—a man who was known by the nickname of Gresech—was charged with the same offence, and on

September 1, "Vm. Ramsay called compeared and declared that he was not in his health when the rest did communicat which was the reason of his absence." However highly we may think of the good old days, we must confess that the people attended the Lord's Table, some of them at least, because they did not dare to be absent.

# THE COMMUNION TOKENS.

In March, 1898, for the sake of accuracy in keeping the Communion Roll, the old metal "tokens" were given up by us and the present card tokens, containing the name and address of each communicant, were substituted. The last metal token, which was of diamond shape, with the figure of the church on one side, was, as many remember, a very handsome one; but there seems to have been nothing remarkable about any of those that preceded it, and in Brook's *Communion Tokens* only one of ours is mentioned which may have belonged to the seventeenth century. It is a round token, with VI cut into A, the VI marking the number of the table at which it was to be used. If this is the only one known, our old Records bear witness to others. Seeing that there is a cult of token collecting, the Minutes within our present limits which bear witness to these had better be quoted in full:—August 20, 1671, "given to Andro Sandiman Smythe for tikets and led 8 shll." August 23, 1674, "Given for lead to Thomas Johnstown—6 shll" (The purpose of this is left to inference, but as no other is mentioned, we may assume that it was to go along with the next entry). September 20, 1674, "given to John Simson for lead to be tickets—4 shll."

September 26, 1680, "Given for led to be tickets—3 shll 8d." October 10, 1680, "given to Andro Sandiman smithe for making of tickets—4 shll." September 3, 1682, "given for led and uorkmanship for tikets—10 shll 4d." July 3, 1687, "given for tickets to Andreu Doig smith, one lib 6 shll 8d" (£1 6s. 8d. Scots).

Even if the same stamp was used for the others, the last, being in the time of a new minister, would have had a new stamp for his initials most likely.

In the seventeenth century the tokens were not issued, as is now done, to all who were in full communion with the church, but only to such as had been successfully catechised within the year. This is shewn by the Minute of August 23, 1674: "if any in the parochin have not been examined, and gottin tikets, that they com any day the nixt week for the samin."

It is amusing to find that the name of "tickets" which is sometimes used across the border in impolite if mild derision of what we call "cards" of admission to the Lord's Table, was the actual name which was employed here in the seventeenth century for those "tokens" of lead which were in former use. It looks as if it had been preordained that our fathers should give our case and our dignity away! But neither they nor we have ever thought a thing any the worse even if it could be shewn to be "peculiarly Scotch," provided it has been found useful; and as regards "tokens" or "cards" of admission to the Sacrament of the Lord's

Supper, there have been those who have seen in them not a Scottish innovation but the relic of a primitive Christian usage handed down through the Celtic Church—a usage from which the author of the Apocalypse took an illustration in Revelations ii. 17, "To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Other explanations of this verse are possible; but so is this one, for there would be need for some tokens by which the early Christians should be admitted to their secret services in times of persecution when they were not known personally to the elders, and the primitive tokens may have been white pebbles properly marked. If so, the parallel implied by the Apocalyptic writer is one between the ordinary church token and that which admitted those who overcame to all the mystic communion of the heavenly life. If this be the reference, not only have our church "tokens" or "cards" an ancient origin, but they have been hallowed by the spiritual use made of them in Scripture; and if so, the collectors of tokens will have the more to say for themselves.

# THE COMMUNION CUPS.

Four very precious and beautiful Communion Cups, of beaten silver, purchased by the Kirk Session during the period with which we are now dealing, are in use as often as the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper comes round. In the Minute of 16th August, 1680, there occurs the following entry:—"Given to Jon. mitchell 12 shll. for careing over to Egr [Edinburgh] 56 lib. 3 shll. 6d for tuo silver cowps bowght be cryghall for owr kirks use." The minister at that time was Mr. Thomas Robertson, and, as the custom was, his initials appear on the cups ($\frac{M}{TR}$). Having been married to a daughter of his predecessor, Mr. John Rattray, who was on one theory an uncle of Patrick Rattray of Craighall, and in any case a neighbouring laird and a near friend, it was natural that his kinsman by marriage, the laird of Craighall, should do the Alyth people the favour of choosing a pair of "silver cowps" on their behalf when in Edinburgh.

The other pair was got six years later, and the shape is almost exactly the same, but in the inscription "Alyeth" is put on one of them instead of "Alyth" as formerly. In those days, spellings were rather variable, and of this fact another instance may be seen in the spelling of the cups themselves in the second

Minute of date 7th March, 1686, which is as follows:—"William Mathow hes receaved owt of the box, 57 lib. 9 shll. to bring hom tuo silver cups owt of Egr." In a week's time, there is another reference to the subject:—"William Mathow, merchant and deacon of session, browght hom tuo silver cups at 56 lib. 16 shll., and gave a shilling sterling in drink-mony. Item 6 shll. for ŭin and aill, and the cups uas 3 drop lesse nor a pound; and he gave in 7 shll. of superplus."

Evidently the cups had been ordered beforehand, for though a pair of the old pattern might possibly have been got from the same silversmith ready made, and engraved with the old inscription immediately on the order being given, it seems unlikely on several grounds, and particularly on this, that $\frac{M}{TR}$, the initials of Mr. Thomas Robertson, appear on the new cups as on the former pair, but by this time Mr. Robertson was dead, although his successor had not yet been appointed or even chosen. Probably the order had been given for the second pair after the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the previous August, when the need would be felt, and almost certainly it was given before 22nd November, 1685, when the minister's death is recorded: "No preaching this day but reading becawse of owr minister his deathe."

These cups, exceedingly worthy of their purpose, were very expensive in comparison with the articles of daily use, and they might be valued on that ground; but our fine old cups have a value now far beyond their

cost. Our forefathers have partaken of the Sacramental wine from these sacred vessels for more than two hundred years, and the solemn religious feelings, the holy memories, the immortal hopes, the repentant sighs, the deep and blessed resolutions of those whose lips they have touched, cling to them in our regard. The day will come when the cups which we have caused to be made on their pattern will also be valued for these things; may we strive to be worthy of the respect and love of those who will look back to us.

# PULPIT NOTICES.

The pulpit notices which announced special services have already been dealt with in the article upon that subject, and others will fall to be treated under their appropriate heads; but the remainder may be separated into two divisions—

(1) Those ordered by the Government; and
(2) Those expressing the wishes of the minister or Kirk Session.

Not many of the intimations ordered by the Government are left to be mentioned here, but, such as they are, they link us on to the wider history of the time.

Probably the first question a Scotsman will ask in approaching the subject is, whether any of the atrocious Acts of Parliament against the Covenanters appear in the book? And the answer is that the substance of none is given; but it is stated on September 30, 1677, that "the proclamation made anent conventikls and baptisms and mariages with not authorized ministers was read after sermons." The Act here referred to dated from 1670, and by it any minister who did not accept the Episcopal government of the Church and the dominance of the State therein was to be imprisoned

if he prayed or preached in any house except his own, and, even there, before others than the members of his own family. If imprisonment did not produce proofs of acquiescence, it was to be ended by banishment. Those who attended the service were to be harried with heavy fines. And if the attendance was so great that even a few of the listeners were obliged to stand outside, or if the service was held in the open air, it was a conventicle, and the punishments were to be so much the greater. The preacher was to be condemned to death and confiscation of his belongings, the hearers crushed with great fines, while those who arrested the minister were to get £30 reward and a free pardon if they happened to kill him or any of his company. These things have not been forgotten: is it any wonder?

But if the mention of this Proclamation is all that touches the Covenanters, there is found in the year 1670, which saw the issue of the worst laws against them, a law not quite so cruel but equally inconsistent with life in a free country, and all the more disgraceful because of the specious motives which were behind the passing of it:—

"This day [February 27] ane act anent papists was read as followes

Egr [Edinburgh] 13 of Januar 1670

The lords of his majesties privie cownsell considering that by the 43 act par: 3. Ja: 6 the airchbishiops are appointed by themselves and the ministers to tak up

the names of all suspect to be papists or that does not communicat in the sacraments and to admonish them to recant their errors and to give confession of their faithe and to participat in the sacraments and to submitt themselves to the disciplin of the churche within a short space and in caise of failzie to excommunicat them and to present the names of the persons dissobedient, obstinat or relapse to the king that the sam may be affixed on the tolboothe of Egr or other places of Judgment and these persons are declared infamows and unable to stand in iudgment bear office or be assyessors or witnes against any professing the true religion. In persuance of the qche act and former act of cownsell the sds lords doe seriowslie recomend to the archbishiops and bishiops to requyr the severall ministers in their respective dioces to tak up a list of all persons within their parishes who ar known or suspect to be papists and who upon the accownt of poprie do not resort to the churche and publict worship therin and to condischend upon their particular designations qualities and condiscions, and whiche of them are in any publict office or imploimcnt and upon suche as being formerlie of the reformed religion have made defactions therfra and turned papists and return theise lists under their hands to the archbishiops and bishiops that he after the consideration therof may draw owt ane exact list of the wholl papists within his diocie condischending in maner above mentioned and report the sam subscribed under his hand to the cownsell betuixt and the first

of June nixt and recomends to the archbishiops and bishiops to be carfull that suche persons as being formerlie protestants, have made defection to poprie be proceeded against and in caise of their obstinacie censured with excommunication and that they return ane accownt of their diligence therin to the cownsell To the end they may give order for executing the lawes acts of parliament against theis persons with all rigowr: Extract by me sic subter: Alexr Gibson."

This law, which turned ministers, bishops, and archbishops into a sort of common informers, would seem to have had some effect in Alyth in hastening forward a long standing case, for on June 26 following we read that "the minister having gottin ordor from the prisbyterie to excomunicat Jon Ogilvy Wm Fithie in Balquhym and Jon and Issobell Ogilvy in Inschioche hes yet continued them untill this day 8 dayes." No more seems to have been heard of the matter till August 14, on which day "the minister did publictlie show that he was for to excommunicat" them "the nixt sabthe," but when he was about to proceed "Jon Ogilvy the yowng laird of Balfowr having a commission from Jon Ogilvy did speak to the minister for a delay, whilk made the minister to desist." However, on October 16, he intimated that they "are to be excomunicat becawse they have never com to the ministers all the time of their continuation of their processe." We are left to imagine the rest, but we hear of the young laird of Balfour again and

infer a considerable friendship, since, in September, 1673, a meeting of Session was dispensed with because the minister went away to the kirk of Rattray to baptise a child of his.

On August 2, 1685, "The proclamation for securing the peace of the highlands was published after divine service." This proclamation, dating from 1669, and enforcing anew all the laws that had been passed for quieting the Highlands, may be seen in the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*. It is very long, and the congregation must have been weary that day. It was read in Alyth, doubtless because the Earl of Airlie's name is in the list of landlords and chieftains of clans who are to appear annually before the Council to renew their bonds for the peace of the Highlands.

Coming now to the second class of pulpit notices, we get light cast on the domestic life of the time—a life that must have been common to Scottish rural parishes:

October 24, 1669.—"The minister did publictlie gave admonition and warning to the people speciallie to those in the town of Alyt that they wold not prophain or brak the sabt by browing or provyding any provision against the fair and great mercat instant."

*The New Statistical Account* (1845) says there were six annual fairs in Alyth, though St. Malogue's (25th June) and the Troit Fair (about Christmas) were by then merely nominal. Two of the others, however, lasted two days each, and we may well

suppose the early November fair of 1669, being a "great mercat," was one of these. We look back on the fairs with a tender melancholy. To-day in Alyth the very word has fallen into disuse, and "market" has taken its place, but the last of the "markets"—the half-yearly feeing fairs—stirring as they were a score of years ago, are now almost as extinct as the old word.

September 3, 1671.—"The minister did intimat that non wold goe to the woods upon the sabbath to gather nuts." Practically the same notice was given on August 28, 1681, when "the minister admonished and warned that non go to gather nutts in the woods upon the sabbothe under the pain of severe censuring."

Hazel nuts were in great request in those days, being plucked not merely by passers-by in an Autumn walk, but sought and kept as a dainty. And, despite Church frowns upon superstitions, it was no doubt looked on as being the part of a good housewife to get a sufficient supply gathered for the festivities of Hallowe'en, when, as a century after—

> "The auld Guidwife's weel-hoordet nits
> Are round an' round divided,
> An' monie lads' an' lasses' fates
> Are there that night decided."

July 26, 1674.—"The minister getting knowledg that the saboth is not weel keeped and observed by many in the town of alight in that they send ther cairts to the hil for petts befor sabbaths midnight. Therefor it is enacted by ordinance of the session that

if any member of the session shal suffer his eairt to goe to the hil befor the said tim he shal be put of his chairg and his servant shal be punished with al others vho shal doe the like as the session shal think fitting."

A pretty kettle of fish, indeed! Who would have thought it?

Nowhere else in the Minutes are carts mentioned. Even lime and slates are brought on horseback. Doubtless the "cairts" are what are now called "slipes" or sledges, suitable only for dragging boulders to the side of a field or for the bringing in of light bulky articles from a short distance.

July 23, 1676.—"The minister did intimat that none give in doits or uncurrant money to the poors alms and that they put out no cloths to dry on the sabbath and that none stay nor be in the church-yeard in tim of sermon."

February 18, 1677.—"It is regrated this day by the session that there is many vagabonds both men and women without testimonials received by many within the toun of alight in there houses to cohabit and duel with them without acquainting the minister or any of the session, therefor it is the session's desire that it be publikly intimat from pulpit the next lord's day, that they do not the like thereafter under the pain of the censure of the church."

December 15, 1678.—"The minister declares that there are divers that hes come to be maried unaequainting him of their dyet qhich brings some trowble in continuall waiting upon them therefor it

is ordained that those that are abowt to be maried acquaint the minister therof abowt eight days befor the time that he may wait upon them, otherwais the minister hes libertie to choise ane other dyet." This is called an Act in the margin, but it must have been a pulpit notice too. It is to be hoped that if any young people henceforth broke the law herein expressed, they would find the minister's bark worse than his bite.

April 13, 1684.—On this day was read another notice similar in substance to the second last. None were to pretend ignorance of it.

"Alight 11 of Aprile 1684, Thomas Ogilvy of Tarfechie bailyie of the town and barronie of alight, upon ane earnest desire given in to him be the minister of alight in ane fenced cowrt holdin in the church thereof, Mentioning that ther have been in times bygon severall persons, howse keepers uithin the town and barronie of alight, that have recept lewd vagabonds banisht persons from other parochs, uhoors with child and divers others uithowt testimonialls, Which as it draws on ureath on the place uher they are, so its a constant trowble to the minister, to prevent uhich in obedience to the foirsaid desire the bailye forsaid hes inacted and ordained, and hereby enacts and ordains ilk person uhither master or tennant or subtennant uithin the bownds of his jurisdiction that shall be fownd to recept such persons as are above prohibited, in five merks for the first falt and ten for the next, and the fyn to be doubled toties quoties, and the foirsaid vagabownds and lewd persons by owr officers

concurrance at the ministers command to be laid in stocks and choks; extract be John Ramsay clerk to the cowrt."

Church "lines," which in their present form are the passport to Sacramental privileges alone in the parish to which a member of the Church has flitted, were then the passport to being allowed to live there at all.

These pulpit intimations bring us into interesting contact with the history and the parochial and domestic life of long ago. Others not noted elsewhere, which might be quoted, are omitted as unimportant.

# THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH.

Strangers to Scotland and its history have very little idea of the powerful efforts made by the Church of Scotland ever since the Reformation towards producing a clean and orderly life amongst the people. The type of Christianity taught by her made for these virtues in the highest degree; but not content with mere teaching, nor with the imparting of the spirit and motives of the Gospel, the Church took the sternest measures of discipline, and, if severity could have made perfection, surely none would have been freer from sin.

The Church has now come to realise that violent methods do more harm than good, and that human nature is not to be successfully pitched out with a fork. And so Kirk Sessions, to whom the oversight of the parish in this matter belongs, are now empowered to deal with the few offences, of which they still take note, in comparative privacy, either through the minister or through the minister and an elder, in the endeavour to win to a sincere repentance rather than to terrorise or to shame. But in the days of long ago, most rigorous measures were taken by Kirk Sessions, and no thoughts of future sorrow could induce them to refrain from recording the name and offences of delinquents.

In our extracts we cannot, of course, give the name of every sort of offender. We cannot, for instance, give the names of the unchaste except in a few cases where there can be no possible association with names still found in the district. But in referring to other offences where there was no filth, and therefore no offensive stain, it is generally otherwise. People may be inclined to look on the doings of their ancestors with an amused tolerance, and even to pride themselves on a possible connection with men and women who lived so long ago, and did a little out of the conventional; just as many Scots pride themselves on having ancestors whose names appear in the Ragman Roll, notwithstanding its reflection on the tenacity of their patriotism.

The first occasion when a name is mentioned is when the offender is "delated," that is to say, accused of the offence. Next week the accused person, having been summoned, appears before the Session, and, with rare exceptions, either confesses and declares repentance or is "convinced of" the sin. In certain cases the matter may take end there and then with a rebuke, but more frequently the delinquent has to profess repentance before the whole congregation. How often that has to be done depends on the heinousness of the offence. For Sabbath-breaking the Session is satisfied with not more than one appearance, but for sins of impurity it requires not less than three, unless under very special circumstances. The guilty ones have to go to the "public place of repentance," otherwise

known as "the stool of repentance," or "the stool" simply, two times without having to say anything, and then on the third occasion repentance has to be expressed in so many words by the offender before being "received" or "absolved." In cases of relapse, six public appearances have to be made—the first five in silence.

Those who have been guilty of trilapse or quadrilapse or adultery or incest are more severely dealt with still. They come before the Session in sackcloth, and are ordered to go before the Presbytery in that garb, expressing their repentance. Then after a varying number of appearances before the congregation in the same habit, generally once but sometimes twice each Lord's Day, they are referred back to the Presbytery, which then met about once every three weeks, and on the following Sunday they are received.

The Alyth practice as regards the number of appearances before the congregation was in agreement with the scale drawn up by the General Assembly of 1648 in respect to the cases which did not require to go before the Presbytery; but that scale went on to demand twenty-six appearances for trilapse and for adultery, thirty-nine for quadrilapse and for relapse in adultery, and fifty-two for incest. Alyth, like other parishes, seems to have looked on this as "a pious imagination"; yet the number of public appearances required in actual practice, though subject to mutations, was very severe, and any attempt at delay caused only more publicity and pain, for, after due warning, the

summons was announced once and again from the pulpit. There is both Scripture and experience for the statement that where sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Kirk Sessions were believers in this principle, and proceeded with celerity, but they did not hesitate to prolong the punishment in proportion to the offence.

In addition to the appearances in the stool of repentance, there was, of course, the rebuke from the pulpit, but what the minister said is nowhere mentioned.

Towards the end of the book the names of those who delated others are sometimes given, but as a rule it is merely stated that so and so "is delated suspect of" the sin. No doubt the elder of the district would usually get to know what was common talk, and would report it if it seemed probably true. The system afforded many opportunities for paying out evil grudges, but doubtless the cases would mostly be reported without any such intervention.

From one source or another the delations were extremely numerous. As one reads, one wonders whether there is ever to be a week when there is nobody either expressing repentance or being delated, but at length come such welcome phrases as "no emergeand scandall," "no imagined scandall," "no emergent scandal found," "no emergeant scandal known by any of the session," "no delation"; and in the years 1675, 1676, this becomes so common that one gets to

believe coercion has wrought a radical reformation. Alas! there comes a rude awakening, and one is by no means surprised when, on May 2, 1680, the stair of the stool of repentance turns out to have been under repair.

The offences dealt with by the Kirk Session of Alyth within the period of our study may be summed up as almost wholly two:

(1) Offences against the sanctity of the Sabbath; and
(2) Offences against chastity.

Whether most of the others were dealt with by the Baron-bailie, or what else were the explanation, they are scarce in our volume.

Amongst the exceptions to the general rule may be classed the efforts made by the Session, in view of the approaching Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to reconcile those who were at variance. On June 25, 1676, it is reported that all are reconciled, and previously (August 12, 1671) it was in connection with the same sacred feast that "Helen Jameson and Grisall Whyt being accowstomed to flyt and scald and now being at variance ar reconciled befor the session and have promised not so to flyt and scald in tym coming under the pain of ten lib. Scots."

There was no Communion near, however, in October, 1670, when Andro Dog and his wife, Elspet Smythe, summoned for striking and abusing each other, "compeired and were convinced of their sin of

dissention and dissagreement and abusing on aneother and the session ordained them to be humbled befor them, qlk they did and promised with god's grace to live more paceablie and godlie concord hereafter as it becomethe husband and wife."

These exceptions are sufficient to shew that the Session did not confine its measures of discipline to cases of Sabbath-breaking and unchastity, but, inasmuch as the great bulk of cases fall into these two classes, it is easy to see what the tendency was.

The first case of Sabbath-breaking was that of Donald Cargill and his wife, who were delated on November 7, 1669, for "playing of woort upon the sabbath." Their case was aggravated by the fact that, a fortnight before, the minister had warned the people against brewing on the Sabbath in preparation for the fair. Next week, as ordered, the two "compeired and confessed that they had som small woort upon the fyr on the sabbath, and were sharplie rebuked befor the session therfor and promised not to doe the lik again." There were no more offences charged against this pair, but it was very likely the same Donald Cargill who, six years later, got thirty-three shillings and fourpence from the poors' box after having received two pounds within a few months.

On the same day as these two compeired, Agnes Tyrie was accused of laying out "a pledding wob to dray upon the sabbath," and a week later she, too, was sharply rebuked before the Session and forced to give the same promise.

On January 9, 1670, Janet Steell was delated for threshing upon the Sabbath, and got the invariable summons. On the 16th, with a natural and subtle minimising of the offenee, she "eonfessed som threshing upon the sabbath and appeared to be sore greeved therfor, and was humbled befor the session. . . . ." Surely she must have been a lonely woman when she had to use the flail herself!

On May 22, 1670, John Rattray and John Straehon, in answer to a eharge, eonfessed they "drave up som eatall in sownday in the evening to the highland but deelared they were at the preatehing." This exeuse was not accepted, however. There was the usual sharp rebuke and the usual promise not to do the like again.

Attention may be called to the rather rare use of "Sunday" in this Minute as the name of the Christian Sabbath. Each Minute taken on that day states at the beginning not merely the day of the month but the "Sabbath," *e.g.*, "May 4 sabt. 22. 1670," or "July 30 day 5 sabthe 1671," and in the body of the Minute, when there was oceasion, the same word was used. But in a very few instances we find proof that the name "Sunday" was also in use. It is well known that even yet there is in some quarters a strong prejudiee in favour of the Hebrew word, although the first day of the week never gets that name in the Seriptures, and although the usage of the English language is to speak of Sunday as the name of the day and Sabbath as the name of the institution, as when we say that the Mahommedan Sabbath is on

Friday, the Jewish Sabbath is on Saturday, and the Christian Sabbath is on Sunday.

Another offence similar to the last was committed on September 3, 1676: "David Hay in rannagullon having grassed some cattel to george Crighton and John watson in alight gave scandal and offence in driving them through the toun of alight upon this sabbath in the morning a litle befor the second bell vherefor he being presently chairgd to compeir befor the session after sermons, was called and compeared, his sin of braking the sabbath was sharply born in upon him vho promised never to doe the like again. The session considering his nature and disposition thought best to accept of his satisfaction befor them and not to bring him befor the congregation whilk he did in there presence." This was a discreet decision on their part, but it did not have the effect of moving them to a weak consistency, for they proceeded to extremities with others on the same day.

The first case of assault and battery mentioned took place in June, 1670, when John Fullerton and John Crighton, having been summoned, confessed to having struck each other on the Sabbath a fortnight before. They seemed sorry, and, as required, declared their repentance before the Session.

By reason of several aggravations, Issobell Elisone and Jannat W—— had to go before the congregation in April, 1672. They had been guilty of "sucaring & baning & striking each other upon the Sabbath."

Some four years later occurred another case wherein "Wm barnat having strocken and wounded Wm Sangster the last lords day to the effusion of much blood . . . was made sensible of his sin," and had to declare his repentance before the congregation a week after, though David Hay had been privately dealt with just before him.

In June, 1677, "Alexander Mcintosh . . . was convinced of his sin in striking agnis Stewart to the effusion of hir blood on the sabbath," and had to profess his penitence publicly.

Elspet and Issobell B——, two sisters, "were convinced of the brake of the sabbath by there sucaring and horrid cursing each other" almost exactly a year afterwards. Evidently there had been a big family quarrel, for Thomas Hay and John B—— had been striking each other on the Sabbath—doubtless on the same Sabbath, though the matter was not reported till a fortnight after the sisters—but their fault was not judged sufficient to bring their declaration of repentance before the congregation.

There remains yet another parallel case. On March 5, 1682, when the Kirk Session met, it was reported that Robert Duncan and William Mustard had been striking each other in the churchyard immediately after sermon. The two hotheads had no heed of the dispersing congregation or of the elders who were witnesses, but next Sunday they were ready enough with their confession of sin, and the week after they duly declared it in public.

There must have been no small stir and not a few smiles in the church when a bevy of girls appeared in the stool of repentance for "going to their neighbours pease," on Sunday, August 14, 1670. Their names were Effie Kid, Issobell Thomson, Agnis Herill, Margaret Dewchers, and Elspet Cryg, and it was because the offence was committed only a week after the Communion that they had to come there.

On March 12, 1671, "John Doctur," maltman in Milnhaugh, was delated for drying malt upon the Sabbath. Next week "John Doctor . . . affirmed necessitie to be the cawse of it, and that the Saturday befor was suche a violent stormie day that it could not be gottin handled at all. He is inacted befor the session that if he be fownd in the lik again he shall be lyable in payment of ten lib. toties quoties."

In July, 1673, Jean Ramsay "confessed the brak of the sabbath in shearing grasse theron," and though doubtless it was no more than would pacify the hunger of her cow and its followers, the Session apparently took the view that that little should have been done on Saturday, and she had to declare her repentance before the congregation.

So also, some eight years after, had Alexander Shirrow when he was "convinced of the brak of sabbothe by shering corn befor the sun." We may presume he had gone on the idea that the Sabbath did not begin till sunrise, and that he might safely push forward his work in the dawning twilight. In his defence, the man would no doubt put forward some

traditional recollection of former usages. In 1590, as Dr. Macgeorge shews, the Presbytery of Glasgow, when prescribing the limits of the Sabbath, laid down a rule, not altered by them for fifty years, that no work was to be done "between light and light in winter and between sun and sun in summer." If Alexander Shirrow pleaded any such usage as delivering him from guilt, he "was convinced" to the contrary by the Session!

The last two Sundays of October, 1675, have Minutes that are more than usually interesting to Alyth people. On the former we read: "This day the minister gave in a grievance anent the greatest part of the merchants of alight who as he was informed did betueen and after sermons keep open their chop doors and selled a number of unnecessar commodities to the great dishonor of god and scandall and offence of others. The minister desired the members of the session to tak this to their seriowse consideration and be ready against the lords day to give in their iudgment that their may be ane effectuall way takin for curbing that dissorder, for this end the minister ordained the church officer to summond all the merchant men and woman foirsaid to be present the next lords day at session. It is also represented to the minister as his great regrait that their be severall within the parish who maks ane ordinar custom to blok and buy, to receive and give money, to fie servants and suche lik he desires the members of the session to tak this likewais to their consideration against the next lords day."

The result is given in the following week: "This day the merchants in alight being chairged were called and compeired and promised not to sell any wares to any person upon the sabbath betueen or after sermons except it be upon necessitie, and that to any sick person, or that it be of necessitie to help to give owt som necessaries for bureing of the dead or such like needfull thing and for performance of the promisse they held up their hands in the presence of the session; not to sell unnecessarie things as they did formerlie upon the sabbath except neidfull tobacco or bread, and their names followes who have made their solemn promise foirsaid wiz: Alexander Sowtor, Thomas Johnstown, John Simson, James Cargill, Alexander Mustard, John Crokat, James Meneur, David Ogilvy, William Dick, John Murdo, John Brown." A small portion of this Minute has often been quoted before, and the inclusion of tobacco as at that time a necessity has been a source of some surprise.

The last part of the minister's charge was brought home specially to the butchers, who do not appear to have carried on a daily shop business like the merchants of the town. Doubtless they had sales of meat only on one or perhaps two days a week. Little meat was eaten long ago, and most of that little was salted in sufficient quantity to last a whole winter. Be that as it may, John Storrer and his son William, "fleshers," who had not been summoned with the merchants a few weeks before, had to answer for making bargains on Sabbath and not frequenting the

church. The father confessed his absence on certain days, but laid the blame on illness. The son denied absence. Both promised regularity in future, and engaged themselves "under the penaltie of ten pound Scots that they nor their vives shall buy nor sell accept nor deliver beaves or muttons on the sabbath."

No other case of this kind occurs until August, 1682, when "John Smithe and Andro Fairuother" accused of "bloking and bargoning upon the sabbathe" were humbled, and promised to buy and sell no more on the Lord's day.

We break new ground as to offences on March 16, 1679, on which day "John Baxter and James wighton called compeared and were convinced of there sin in braking of the sabbath by playing at the foot ball and drawing of durks and are ordained to declare there repentance publikly this day eight days and delated the rest who were players with them wiz John low androw Storrer James collie george bruce David Fithie." These, however, were not required to go further than the Session.

The growing of flax in the parish was an industry which has left its mark merely in some well-nigh forgotten beetling stones, in the traditional recollection of a few ponds, and in the name Damend—Brig o' Dam having now given place entirely to Todpark. This industry is implied in the charge against Christian Miller in September, 1681, for her sin of Sabbath-breaking by "taking up lint." For this a public appearance had to be made.

In May, 1682, "David Neving called compeired and uas convinced of his sin of scandalows and excessive drinking upon the sabbothe." This David was an old and serious offender otherwise, and perhaps his former sin had been partly due to this weakness, but in this matter of excess he had not yet reached the deadly stage of believing himself scandalously drunk, yet he was not beyond being "convinced."

All the old feuars of Alyth have the right of cutting turfs on the Hill or on the muirs-and-mires of Mornity, but few of them go through even the form of it now. It was not a matter of such indifference when in November, 1683, Margaret Alexander was convinced of Sabbath-breaking "by uorking amongst turfs and uindrawing of them," and had to declare her repentance before the congregation.

The last instance of Sabbath-breaking of which we have to take note occurred on the day on which there was no preaching because of the death of Mr. Thomas Robertson, the minister. Donald Anderson and his wife, Bessie Robertson, were delated "for dighting and handling corn publictlie· . . . abowt 10 howrs in the sight of many." The sin did not lie in the publicity, but the evidence did, and, though no Session could be held for a fortnight in the absence of a moderator deputed by the Presbytery, he was ordered to be charged "against this day 14 das". The "dighting" would be done in the wind, for fanners had not then been invented, and a fine sharp wind had doubtless tempted them.

A good many of the cases of Sabbath-breaking recall our minds to trades, employments, or methods of work that are now merely a memory amongst us, and some of them not even that. In them we find the trades of maltster and handloom weaver; we find also home brewing, the use of turf for fuel, hand threshing, winnowing in the breeze, and flax growing, which, however, has been revived since the War began, but only as an experiment, and that merely on a few hundred square yards. These cases are therefore like windows through which we get interesting glimpses not only of the Rabbinical strictness and the inquisitorial, though well-meaning, vigilance of the time as regards the Sabbath, but also of its quiet, domestic, social, and economic life.

We come now to the sins of lust and shame, of weakness and folly; and between the cold formal lines in which the offences are minuted one can sadly read the tale of many a dejected Mariana wishing she were dead, of many a passionate pilgrim, and of many a simpleton lured into meshes that no regrets could cut.

Cases were extraordinarily rife, and a good many were of the worst description. One fancies there were more than now of all shades of shame, but whether that be so or whether they were only better found out, none may say. It is possible that some cases of incest were within degrees of relationship which would not so include them now, but there is no palliating of the cases of adultery or reducing them to anything less vile.

The very first Minute mentions a certain D—— N——, who "did evidence his repentance publictlie in sackelothe for his sin of incest and was received." How often he had stood there before in sorrow and in shame, or until his penitence was turned into hardihood, is not stated; but the partner of his guilt, who had either begun to evidence her repentance later than he, or had not been so diligent in carrying it out, came week by week in the same habit, and her name disappears from the record of that offence only on November 28, 1669, after the twentieth time of entry. But the Presbytery Register of a fortnight earlier tells that she "being referred from the session . . . . profest her repentance in sackeloth." Finding her to be "a sensless stupid woman," the Presbytery ordained the minister to deal with her in private for her further conviction, and remitted her "to the session's discretion to be absolved when they should think most fitt." That was by no means the last of her, however. Her slimy track, like that of a snail, is over the whole Session Book. These degenerates, though themselves to be pitied, have always been a great danger to the morals of a district unto unknown generations, and manifestly, if there is ever to be a cure, the work must be the care of the State.

Cases of adultery were far commoner than one would have expected, and the years 1681 and 1682 were specially bad. One man in the former year—not a first offender—died during the long process of

satisfying the Session, and, no doubt, regarding others something distinctive might be found; but particulars need not be given of any of them. However, a case belonging to 1671 and thereafter may be set out to view in some of its details, partly as a sample and partly because the end was unusual.

As might have been expected, the female offender in this case was the first to be detected. On 23rd July the record is: "Elspet S—— delated suspect of fornication, ordains her to be chairged against the nixt sabbath." A week later, "Elspet S—— called compeired not, ordains her to be chairged pro 2do." Yet a week later and she is charged "pro 3o" (tertio), and the Saturday after she is reported to have "fled therefor dilligence is to be used in searching for her." The next we read is under date September 10: "Wpon tuesday last Thomas Robertson in the Watershell acquainting owr minister Mr Thomas Robertson that Elspet S—— had com in unto a cottermanse howse of his and was deliver of a child, and that he heard it reported that she was for to becom fugitive with it to the highlands as shoon as she becam able for travell. Therefor the minister takse Thomas makie in Bamffe with him being on of the deacons and Mr Thomas Ireland clark and goes to the watershell upon the said day." Being "straitlie and accuratlie" questioned, she laid paternity upon James T——, a married man in Drumturn, whose servant she was, and promised obedience to discipline for adultery. This promise she

duly kept, and after her second visit to the Presbytery, in February, 1672, she was received, having been in the stool of repentance only six times. This commutation was granted her "in respect she is a vagabond."

Meanwhile James T——, in Drumturn, summoned for adultery, paid no attention till he had been charged a third time, and even then he did not appear; but "James Rattray of Rannagullon his master and elder of the session having commission from him, shew that he having made som privat confession . . . desired that the session would continue his publict declaration untill the fair of alight be past . . . qlk the session upon som considerations granted." This was on the 8th of October, 1671, and on November 5, "the mercat being bypast," and he having failed to come, he was threatened with the Presbytery; but he duly appeared in sackcloth the week after and promised to satisfy the discipline of the Church. Accordingly, he obeyed the order to go before the Presbytery in sackcloth, and on January 28, 1672, he proceeded to the public place of repentance for the first time in the like dress. Hindered, doubtless, by home duties and the distance he had to travel, as much as by reluctance, he made his appearances very slowly. It was on September 1 that he came for the fourteenth time, and next week the Minute stands: "James T—— his processe is continued becawse he is fallin presently in murder killing on Alexander and is fled therfor."

The next we learn regarding him is on April 30, 1676, when another hand than that of the Clerk writes, "Seeng James T—— an adulterer and murderer vho is fugitive this tuo year hes gotten som residence in the parochin of grange in the north within the presbetrie of Strabogie with his wife Euphain Smal upon ane counterfeit testimonial as we ar informed by an letter sent from Mr Androu Ker minister at the said pariochin to the minister of lentrathen & from thence to us, vhilk being red in audience of our session shouing his relapsing in adulterie. Our minister & session hes ordained ane letter to be wreat back to the north concerning the said James T—— that they may be informed of his forsaid criminal sins committed with us & that he may be apprehended and punished therfor acordingly as the discipline of the church thinks fitting."

It seems strange to us that a murderer could be hid so long within the bounds of Scotland, and to all appearance hid so effectually that he would not have been found out but for the outrage offered to his wife's feelings again by his relapse in adultery. We have not merely our more complete system of police to thank, but also steam and electricity which have made the world so small that far distant Vancouver or Sydney is not now so remote from Alyth as Grange in Strathbogie seems then to have been.

It appears strange also that the murderer's escape was for a time due to forged Church lines, but no passport between countries in modern day could be

more rigorous or more effective than the system of testimonials between parishes then. They did not merely state, as now, that the person to whom they refer is in full communion with the Church, but they stated whether that person's conduct had been blameless, or, if not, whether discipline had been satisfied; and without bringing one from his last parish, a person was not allowed to live in the place of his desire, but must needs move on for ever, like the Wandering Jew.

Nothing need be said of the cases of trilapse and quadrilapse in fornication, which also came before the Presbytery as well as the Kirk Session and then before the congregation—all in sackcloth—except that the severities used in the first instance of sin were not more effectual future preventatives than the more natural consequences and sorrows now prove themselves to be.

The great bulk of the cases of misconduct, however, were those of a first and last offence, and of such a class that the Kirk Session could finally dispose of them. Of these, very few were distinguished even by a bad eminence, but in one of them there figured a Master of Arts, who was apparently very loath to come forward. The partner of his guilt, being accused, accused him on September 16, 1677, and he was summoned to appear next week; but "being called compeared not," and he had to be "chairged pro 3tio" before he did come with a confession, and a promise to satisfy Church discipline. Not having fulfilled his promise by the fourth Sunday thereafter, he was charged again. By

that time he had gone to Edinburgh, and his public repentance was delayed till he should return—"whilk is to be abowt the first of March." The eye of the session was not lifted from him, however, and on March 17 the order went forth, which he obeyed next week. On the Sunday after, he went to the public place of repentance for the second time, but "was dispenst with for the thrid dyet becawse he was to goe to stay in edinburgh."

There are a few instances in which some one was charged before the Session who could speak only Gaelic. Thus (April 3, 1670) "Marie Nicvie alias mcintosh ane highland woman withowt any inglish went to the publict place of repentance bothe befor and after noon and becawse she cowld not speak to the minister she was received befor the session by ane interpreter." The name sounds unusual, but the prefix *nic* is explained in Macbain's *Gaelic Dictionary* to mean strictly "grand-daughter" and to indicate any female descendant, just as *mac* strictly indicates a male. No doubt Mary's brother would have been called Macvic or Macvey.

Marie Nicvie appears to have been known also as Marie Glenquhattan, and, sad to say, she had to appear again in little more than a year, as had also the same partner in guilt. The interpreter on this occasion was John Robertson, doubtless the member of Session from Tullymurdoch, and formerly from Kirkmichael where Gaelic would then be spoken.

A year later still, another from the same district

was summoned, and "being in the stool of repentance befor and afternoon and in respect she haid no english she was receaved befor the minister and elders by ane Interpreter of the Irish tongue."

These guilty Gaelic speakers were each and all from Blacklunans, but we cannot assume from that mere fact that part of the Blacklunans natives spoke Gaelic so late as the end of the seventeenth century. The first one is distinctly called a Highland woman, and, besides, female servants from Braemar were long ago very common in Glenisla and adjacent districts within reasonable walking distance of the Highland region. The difficulties of language were got over the more easily that their wages were very small.

In 1678 there was one more belonging to this Gaelic group, this time a man—"ane highlander who had no anglish." He, too, required an interpreter—by name Alexander Melvin, who may have been the deacon, Alexander Melvill, from Kingseat.

In these cases the interpreter was absolutely necessary, and we are thus reminded of the value of such a functionary on the fringe between the two languages for court purposes especially. In illustration of this I am afraid I have sometimes put forward the derivation "Croft Teangaire" = Interpreter's Croft, for the field name *Croftangry* near Bamff House. This seemed at least to be an improvement on the absurd interpretation "Croft-an-righ" = King's Croft. But I take this opportunity of withdrawing the suggestion. The name is quite common, and even if there were

no other objection, this would be fatal, that always the first syllable is the English "croft" never the Gaelic "croit." One or two cases of a manifestly hybrid derivation might be defended on the ground of an interpreter's facility in two languages, but this could not stretch over a general rule. The name turns out to be purely Saxon—"hangra," being a "hanging-wood," *i.e.*, a wood on a declivity.

No cause of death is felt to be so pathetic as death in childbed, and if this is true in the case of a young wife, how much more pathetic it is when sin has been the cause of the birth which has resulted in death. Twice in 1670 it is stated with a pathos which seems unconscious that a young woman is dead "and so her processe is ended."

Though nothing is said about it, we may be well assured that every delation would have to have some apparent justification before the Session would take any steps whatever. The extremely small percentage of denials is in itself proof of this. There were such, but those that came to anything were extraordinarily scarce.

In the complete absence of cogent evidence, an accused person might take an oath of innocence. There is a very interesting case of this in our first volume of Minutes, wherein the form of oath is given; but in this one there is nothing found except an offer to take the oath, and the manner of response is quite in accord with the known unwillingness of Sessions to grant the privilege when it could be helped.

On June 16, 1678, Margaret D—— "delated scandalows with on George R——" denied and offered her oath. Thereupon the Session ordained her "not to hawnt his company herafter otherwais to be holden guilty qhich she promised to doe."

Of course, everyone making a charge became subject to the Session's discipline if it became apparent that the charge was pure defamation, and on July 18, 1680, Thomas S—— was delated "for sclandering himself with Janat A—— ane young uoman." Next week he confessed that he had done so "intending therby to have gottin her to marrie." For this wicked folly "The session ordains him to stand befor the churche door in sackclothe betuixt the 2d and 3d bell tuo sabbath dayes and declare his repentance befor the congregation in the said habit."

A somewhat similar case occurred in February, 1686, when David Sandiman, delated for scandalizing Christian Craik with Thomas Miller, confessed "he uas in the urong" in doing so, and had to undergo a public process.

Seeing that testimonials were necessary passports from parish to parish, it was not in the long run much use failing to appear in answer to the Session's summons, or failing to give effect to the decision, and usually the delinquent obeyed as docilely as high-born Romans in "Tacitus" obeyed the Imperial order for suicide; but sometimes the shame was more than they could bear, or sometimes perhaps a breath of freedom and resistance stirred their souls, and so occasionally

they gave some trouble before appearing. If they did not obey any of the three private notices, the third public summons at most usually brought them to heel; but John and Isobel Ogilvy in the Inshoch, having ignored all these citations to appear before the Presbytery to answer for contempt of ordinances and to clear themselves of popery, were at length summoned with prayer, and upon December 26, 1669, they got their third and last "admonition with prayer to compeir at migle on tuysday nixt." The next step, in view of contumacy, was excommunication, for which the minister got orders from the Presbytery six months later.*

There is probably no other case of this kind in the volume, but several of those accused of impurity endeavoured to escape to some distant district. In such an event the report is that A. B., being ordered to offer public repentance, has fled and become fugitive, and diligence is to be used in searching for him or her—the phrase might either be "searching him," or "searching of him," or "searching for him." In 1670 a man who had begun with slow reluctance could stand it no longer and fled to the south.

The steps taken to discover the fugitives were more than mere search, for other parishes joined in the hunt. On September 8, 1672, one of the intimations was "that non in owr parochin recept nor herbor Grizall fugitive from disciplin" from the parish of Kettins.

* Additional particulars concerning them will be found on p. 84.

Again, on March 27, 1681, "the minister summoned Margaret M—— fugitive owt of glenylas paroche and that publictlie from pulpit, and that non accept her in this paroche according to the prisbries order." Next year intimation was made that none "recept" a fugitive from Kirkmichael, guilty of adultery and incest; and a few years later warning was given that none "give residence" to a fugitive from Abernyte.

For various reasons which we can well imagine, fugitives, even though for a time successfully escaped, were apt to drift back. The year 1674 was the outstanding year for that, since no less than three returned. Two of them are described as "long fugitive." The third, who had escaped south in 1671, "returning from Louthian vher he had been residing al this tim in honest service," would appear to have come back, partly at least, to submit himself, for it is added that "because of his distance from us he went up to the publik place of repentance in the forenoon & vas received afternoon."

The natural tendency to be more merciful to guilty ones who have married, or who have taken steps towards marriage, was shewn to a certain extent, but not to such an extent as to allow anybody to forget that guilt was guilt despite after events and efforts. Thus, on October 29, 1676, "James W—— (being ecclesiastically contracted with Jannet C—— upon purpose of mariage) went to the stool befor noon and declared his repentance afternoon." Whereas Robert R—— likewise from "the head of our pariochin," not

being so contracted with Margaret P——, had to come all the distance one day more.

Not only did the Session require signs of penitence spreading sometimes over many days, but there are numerous instances of "penalties" being exacted by them; and so far as this book shews, they were simply imposed and paid as if the Session had authority somehow to demand them, and the defaulters had no other recourse but to pay. We are astonished at this, because according to the law of the land it was illegal, and the Visitors from the General Assembly to the Province of Angus and Mearns had in fact laid down a rule in September, 1649, which is still extant in our oldest Session Book: "That no penaltie nor civill punishments be enjoyned be kirk sessions, but that they be carfull according to the order prescrived in the act of parliament to have ane civill magistrat in evrie paroche vho may exact ther respective penalties prescryved in ther respective actes of parliament against scandalowes offences and deliver them to the kirk session for the use of the poor." It is true that that rule was laid down in a Presbyterian period, but Episcopacy made no difference in such a matter. Yet it is suggestive that the penalties, such as there are, are all towards the end of the book in the few years before the Revolution Settlement. Probably the law had been more literally obeyed in the earlier years. It looks as if the Session were desirous of a literal obedience when, in 1672, they chose William Ramsay "Bylzie," to be one of their number. No doubt, if

put to the question, the man who wrote about "penalties" would reply that these were no part of the punishment but part of the mitigation of the punishment, to be chosen by the guilty only when they chose.

Samples of such payments are as follows:—

On February 21, 1686, Thomas S——, who had appeared only once before the congregation, declared his repentance and paid forty shillings of penalty; and on the same day Thomas C—— paid forty shillings of penalty "own long since."

In 1686, David Sandiman, guilty in the previous year of slandering others, was now twice guilty himself. For the first offence he appeared four times in the stool before he "uas absolved"; and for the second, after one public appearance, he paid a penalty of three pounds four shillings for the privilege of being received in private.

On October 17, 1686, Thomas Gall, who had a child born to him too soon after marriage, paid one pound sixteen shillings of penalty. The name of Thomas Gall is here given not only because it is extinct in the district, but also because it shews that some two hundred and thirty years ago there were those in residence near by who bore the name of the person whose name is commemorated in "Gauldswell"—the *d* being merely intrusive, and that only in writing and print.

In January, 1687, another married pair paid two pounds and appeared before the Session only. In April

of the same year a pair who had been proclaimed were absolved after a second public appearance, the man paying two pounds ten shillings.

In May of the same year one William C——, with the surname of a great German philosopher, "gave in of his penalty" five pounds two shillings. On that very day he "appeared for the last time in the stool confessd his sin and uas absolved"; and so this disproportionately large penalty, whatever it was, was not the price of any mitigation of the ordinary process of discipline. Perhaps light might be thrown on the whole matter if we knew what his "fie" was, which was arrested two months previously.

Sometimes we find caution given that the penalties imposed would be paid. It was quite a business-like transaction to make sure of the money in this way in a poverty-stricken age, so that what had been promised in a burst of penitence and shame should not afterwards be sought in vain. On November 29, 1685, a guilty pair having been proclaimed, got a testimonial to be married, and the bridegroom "fand Thomas Lighton cawtioner that he shall satisfie bothe in repentance and penalty and cawse her doe the lik uhen they shall be requyred." In September, 1687, John R—— gave in a bond that he would satisfy discipline. And, eleven years before, on the same principle of making siccar, the father of a child born in Lintrathen, desiring a testimonial to get the child baptised by the minister there, had to find a cautioner —Alexander Hedon—that he would satisfy the Church

in all points, "and John Edward was cationer for the said Jannet that she should satisfie likewais as shoon as she wold be able for to travel" back to Alyth.

The money paid by way of penalties was well bestowed, for it went towards the support of the poor, and also towards the support of education in the parish, inasmuch as a part of it was a perquisite of the Session Clerk, who was then always the schoolmaster.

It would seem that once a person had expressed repentance to the Session and had entered upon the prescribed course of discipline in due form, the effect was to be as though one had "tholed one's assize." At all events, in December, 1672, a man was ordered to take back his wife though a grave past had been opened up, for which she was now in process of answering to the Church. It is true there might have been such a previous knowledge as amounted in the Session's opinion to condonation, but the other reading is possible and perhaps more probable.

Let it be noted in passing that this is a case where even the monotony and formality of the Minutes cannot obscure the vivid fact that the way of transgressors is hard. Married in March, doubtless with every expression of gladness and hope, she had a husband whose affection was apparently enough to induce him to screen her impurity by presenting her child for baptism as his own. But whether he was being charged to go before the Session with the congregation to follow, and could not submit to that, or whether he took a disgust at the whole relationship,

by August he refused to acknowledge the child. Thereafter once and again the disgraced woman shamed herself by her clumsy confessions, which involved her at last in trilapse instead of simple impurity. Put away by her husband, we find him refusing to accept her again "so long as she is in fostering of" the child. A few weeks later, when, according to her promise, she should have begun her terrible course of repentance in sackcloth, she fled. By the end of November she was back, and, "confessing her trelapse she is ordained to compeir befor the prisbrie and proceed with her repentance." The Presbytery she managed to attend, but, her child having died, she had no more incentive to face the congregation in sackcloth, and again she fled. The next incident is the promise of her husband, extracted by the Session, to take her back "and duell togidder with her as it becoms husband and wife to doe"; but not for a year and a half is any more heard of her. Then she reappears after "being long fugitive" and promises "to go up to the publict place of repentance the nixt sabbath befor & after noon." Diligently fulfilling this promise, she is allowed to appear twice each week, and on the afternoon of the fourth Sabbath to declare her repentance.

There is one case recorded of the removal of excommunication. On March 14, 1675, "Lawrie Sym ane excommunicat person in the parochin of glenyla, desiring relaxation and the prisbrie ordering him to go abowt severall of their kirks manifesting his publict repentance for the samin effect; This day he stood

and was clothed withe sackclothe befor the sermons at the kirk door, and went to the publict place of repentance befor and after noon in the said habit in time of sermon."

According to the Presbytery Record, he had been excommunicated for "poperie" years before, had recently come to live in Bendochy, and had a desire to be received into the fellowship of the Church. Accordingly a committee of the Presbytery was appointed to speak to him in private, and the minister of Bendochy was asked to deal frequently with him. The latter reported that "he seemed to be weighted with his sin and sincere in his desire to return to the communion of our church," and the Presbytery decided that he should be received; but first he was required to declare his repentance in "Bennathie," "Alioth," and "Glenila." The first time the minister of Glenisla was thereafter at the Presbytery he removed some of the glamour from the man's conscientiousness in standing out so long by saying that he had been excommunicated not merely for his religion but "for many fornications, contumacy and poprie."

The ritual of restoration after undergoing discipline, as well as several other relative facts, is shew more or less in a Minute of August 6, 1681: "Alexander Heddon being befor the prisbyterie on tuesday last and the minister holding owt the busines befor the prisbyterie concerning him and that the celebration of the Lord's supper uas at hand and therfor a considerable number of the session uithe the minister

meeting befor sermon all thowght fitt he showld be rceeived this day; uhilk uas done for he being at the piller the place of repentance in sackclothe, he cam down uithe the samin habit and by the minister befor the pulpit he uas received and taken be the hand."

In this last Minute we find a phrase which in another parish church might have been taken in a different sense from what it seems to have had in ours. "The piller the place of repentance" would elsewhere generally mean "the pillory, the place of repentance" —"the piller," or "the pillory," being a name for what is usually known as "the stool of repentance." But more than once the word "piller" is used in our Minutes with reference to the architectural pillar at which the stool stood, and we need not suppose it means anything else here. It will be recalled further that when the place is called "the stool of repentance," the offender is described as being "in the stool"—shewing that the name was given not to the seat so much as to the exalted enclosure in which the stool was placed.

This account of the Church of Scotland's measures and methods of disciplinary treatment in the olden time, as exemplified at Alyth, gives us a fairly minute view of an age very different in many ways from the present.

As regards the disciplinary measures themselves, the only relic of the penitential appearances before the Presbytery in sackcloth is the necessity still imposed

upon Kirk Sessions in the same gross cases of asking leave of the Presbytery to deal with them.

And in their own action towards delinquents Sessions have given up all such dramatic trappings and ritual; and, in fact, have given up the plan of publicity altogether, quite as much because they have lost faith in its efficacy and its Christian fitness as because nobody would now deign to obey such an order.

Our ideas of Sabbath-keeping are less strict than of old, but we owe something to our forefathers' strictness, and we realise the worth of our inheritance too vividly to fling it wantonly away. On the other hand, though we believe in different methods, our ideas of the evils of illicit communications are not less strict and sorrowful than theirs. The officers of every congregation are anxious both to prevent and to cure, and the Church as a whole has organised in her Social Scheme these means of cure. But we look for certain measures of prevention to be taken by the State, in ways not open to the Church, in accordance with the best thought and skill of the time; and though we cannot look for perfection till the Spirit of the Lord fully purifies our human nature and inspires every heart, we trust that there will be some amelioration of this grave and sad and exceedingly dangerous evil.

# PART II.

## DETAILS MAINLY GATHERED FROM RECEIPTS OR PAYMENTS.

# FINANCIAL.

In seeking to present a general account of the money and the money transactions which come within our present scope, the first thing one probably thinks of is to mention the coins with strange or extinct names. These are not many. We read a few times of "dollors" or of "rex-dollors," and the exchange of the handbell shews that a rix-dollar was equal to fifty-eight shillings Scots. Once "the minister did intimat that none give in doits or uncurrant money to the poors alms." There were bawbees, and, lower still, there were bodles, about which never a word, good or bad, is said; but this Dutch doit, which was of even less value than the humble bodle, besides being an insignificant contribution, would doubtless be difficult to dispose of in large quantities. Hence the intimation. Hence also that expression of the most contemptuous indifference still occasionally heard—"I don't give a doit!"

But if these are the only coins with names extinct in our currency, the others are of extinct values. Even when expressed in pounds, shillings, and pence, the money, except in a few cases specially noted, is Scots not sterling; and consequently, to prevent as far as possible even a casual reader of our summary from mistakes, the marks of sterling money have not been

used, unless in the quotations of pence, where "d" was the Scots sign as well as the sterling. In these quotations pounds, shillings, and pence are expressed by "lib., shll., d." "Lib." is of course a contraction of the Latin *libra,* a pound, and is readily recognised to be the same as "lb." which still stands for a pound or pounds, but in weight not in money. It hardly needs to be added that the sterling £ is only a more complete contraction. The slanting stroke, which is the sterling indication for shillings, is also a more complete contraction of the older sign "shll." It is recognisable as the special form the letter s took in the combination "sh" of the old manuscripts. This strikes one specially when the shilling has been forgotten in the sentence and afterwards inserted above the line, with no part of the word standing behind the figures except the long stroke which stood for the "s." The "s" may originally have been the initial of the Latin "solidus," as is asserted, but the "slanting stroke" seems to shew at least the influence of the English "shilling."

The payments are plainly stated in the body of each Minute, and the only expressions which have a quaint appearance are *imprimis* and *item*. "Imprimis," being the Latin for "in the first place," is occasionally set down before the first payment in the list, and more frequently "item" is set before all payments except the first; or, if it be omitted before most of the details, it may introduce a new group, or sometimes it may be set before each payment in the new group except

the first. This use of "item" shews that it had its strict Latin meaning of "likewise," but it is easy to see how by its appearance before each new detail the foreign conjunction became an English noun at last, permitting us to speak as we now do of "the next item on the programme," and, in forgetfulness of its origin, to talk of "the first item in the account."

In the purchase of our second pair of Communion Cups, a *pourboire* of one shilling sterling seems to be accepted as equal to six shillings Scots, but perhaps there has been some error. Usually it is said, at all events, that the shilling Scots was equal to about a penny sterling at that time—a fact acknowledged elsewhere in our Volume—and so a pound Scots (1 lib.) was equal to about 1s. 8d. sterling; but such a translation into sterling money has been avoided because entirely misleading for us—just as misleading as it would be to say that the New Testament penny, being the Roman denarius, is therefore equal to $8\frac{1}{4}$d. The value of a coin such as that is to be discovered not by how much silver or other metal there was in it, but by what it was worth to those who used it. And just as we have the information that "a penny" was a labourer's day's wage in New Testament Palestine, so we learn that in Alyth, on January 28, 1677, the wages of a master joiner and his son together (working as journeymen) were assessed at twenty shillings (Scots) per day. A pound Scots, therefore, bought not much less in joiners' labour than a pound sterling at present, and if it be said that these are

critical times, so were those. Unfortunately, our Session Book does not permit us to supplement this rough test by a comparison of their wages with the price of their wants, so as to shew which would be the richest at the end of the day, still less does it supply the details that would shew which was richest at the end of the year. There are multitudes of payments, but only a few can be quoted which are so definite as to be of use, and these give very inconsistent results.

Some prices confirm the impression got from the wages that one shilling Scots was not much less in value, if any, than one shilling sterling at the present time, *e.g.*, shoes for the poor, which would of course be all hand-made, if not very fancy, cost from eight to eighteen shillings, according to the age of the wearer, those for an old woman being sixteen shillings. By the by, the word "boots" never once occurs, but always either "shoes" or "shoon."

The inferences in respect of clothes are more difficult, since material and quality are not detailed, and since the age and size of the wearers, which make such a difference, are not mentioned. We do not learn anything very definite from the giving of thirty shillings, for instance, "to buy a coat to a poor bodie," nor of fifteen shillings for "a coat to Andro Henderson," in the one case because of sex and in the other because of age. But we get a little more information when we are told that "their was tuo merks and half given to buy a coat to ane poor criple lade John Thomson," and a further sum of six shillings

for the making of it; for he was just passing from the stage of 8s. shoes to that of 8s. 6d. We are again in the region of the vague and uncertain when, four years later, he gets thirty-six shillings "to buy clothes to him." In the case of "Janat Whyt, a blind lasse," for whose shoes ten shillings were given in 1669, thirty shillings were required five years afterwards "for buying a coat and shoon to her"—the coat, which was doubtless a petticoat, might therefore cost about seventeen shillings, if all the money was spent on the purchase, and, being for outer wear, it would be of strong material.

In 1680 "10 quarters of clothe to be clothes to Ualter Donaldson" cost thirty-two shillings.

The price of light home-made linen—as we may assume for that date—can be gathered from the burial of the dead. A winding sheet for a poor child cost seven shillings, and in other cases it cost from eighteen shillings to twenty-five shillings.

Incidentally, it may here be added that a "chist," or coffin, for the poor was priced variously—sixteen shillings, twenty-six shillings, forty-eight shillings, or even three pounds; and, as mountings were not customary, nor indeed legal, these charges would not be far from the average.

The rent of houses, or at least of houses occupied by the poor, was small: on December 19, 1686, there was given "to Elizabeth finnie, a criple, to pay her house-male 2 lib.", and again, on November 27, 1687, there was "given to Elspet finnie 2 lib. to pay her house

meale." Doubtless this rent was both years for the same person, and even if it had been sterling money it would not have been dear.

Schooling for children, too, was cheap, being six shillings and eightpence per quarter. It may be impossible to compare that with present-day charges, which are paid indirectly, but in some districts, at least, it is remembered that the only difference apparent to the scholars upon the introduction of School Boards was the increase of the fee from five shillings to six shillings sterling per quarter.

A poor child of three or four years of age was boarded out for ten pounds per annum, which seems moderate. But we are not on very sure ground in respect to the livelihood of paupers, since their income from begging was counted upon, and if begging could not be done by such a child, it could be done on its behalf.

Most of these prices tend to shew that one shilling Scots at the end of the seventeenth century was not much less in value than one shilling sterling now.

But other prices tell a very different story.

Meal, doubtless the great staff of life at that time, was excessively dear in comparison with these things. In 1669 it was four pounds per boll—not even in ready money. In 1675 (July 18), twelve shillings were given to a supplicant "to buy an pect of meale," but surely he was meant to get two pecks.

A few special articles have their prices mentioned, and they mostly group themselves in the class which

belittles the worth of the shilling Scots; for naturally the cheapness was lacking which we owe so largely to steam:—

Limestone in 1671 was 13s. 4d. per boll
" " 1674 " 14s. "
" " 1681 " 18s. "
" " 1686 " 16s. "

and a lime riddle in 1681 was five shillings.

Home wrought slates in 1673 were twenty shillings per hundred, but those bought from a recognised quarry might have proved cheaper as well as better.

Rope for the bell was tenpence per yard in 1671, and in 1684 it was 1s. 1½d.

A drop of silk thread, that is to say, 1-16th oz., cost one shilling and sixpence; and velvet and fringes were also relatively dear.

The locks bought during the period cost twenty-four shillings, forty shillings, and, in a third instance, there was "given to Abraham Lou in balbrogie, for a lock and other uork to the high church door 8 lib,"—which suggests a charge of more than two pounds for this large lock.

The price of the Communion Cups—being about twenty-eight pounds each—seems excessive in comparison with any of the foregoing, but in the purchase of silver articles the actual amount of silver in the Scottish silver coins would of course be of prime importance.

Taking the prices of clothes and especially of boots

as a standard, many of these articles seem excessively dear, but we need not lavish our pity too much on the Alyth folks of long ago, for they had a grand way of doing without. If locks were expensive, they did with bars; and if one door in a house must needs have had a lock to turn when everybody was out, it would not wear done with much use, for the bar would serve when anybody was within. If lime was dear, they built their houses with mortar, which hereabout means clay; and where possible they made use of claycat, a composition of which few of us have heard, and these mostly in rebukes to children alleged to be "as clorty as a claycat." But in building partitions with claycat, wooden casings were set up, and then wisps of straw, dipped in a fluid mixture of clay with the addition of a little cow dung, were dumped in till the required height was attained. The name may have been due to the shape of the wisps, but I venture to think our place name Claywhat may be a stepping stone to a truer interpretation. Claywhat seems to be Old English claeg hwæte (claywheat) in half-arrested development, and if so the modern mansion has a name that tells of a humble origin.

Our review of prices yields us, as has already been said, very inconsistent results; but all things considered, the evidence available in our book goes largely to shew that a Scottish tradesman at the end of the seventeenth century was rich rather by the fewness and simplicity of his wants than by the cheapness of the articles he might buy if he had a mind.

The valued rent of the parish of Alyth—then only about half a century distant from the date at which it was computed—can easily be deducted from the Minute of June 21, 1674, when the heritors, in meeting an estimated expenditure of 198 pounds for repairs, resolved that James Sowtor, notary, should draw up a bond, signed by all, and that he should collect the money "according to 50 shll. the hundrethe lib. rent." As James Sowtor's personal account would be an addition, and as extras might be expected, this would give a valuation for the parish of something over 8,000 pounds. The actual Old Valued Rent, still in use for Church purposes, is £8,233 17s. 3d.

This valuation being known, we can easily deduce the sum spent after May, 1681, at "45 sh. the 100 lib." of valued rent, for which "James Sutor" was again factor, but for which he had not given in "the compt of his diligence" at his death in 1682, necessitating a threat of proceedings (June 17, 1683) against those heritors who could not produce a discharge from him.

The income, for the poor, and for the salary of the Clerk and Church Officer, and for anything else in the Session's charge, was derived from quite a number of sources: from collections; from fees at baptisms; from fees for proclamations of marriage; for the use of the mortcloth; for burial within and without the church; from bequests; from penalties; and also from accumulated moneys lent at interest or invested. Such of these as are not dealt with elsewhere or under other aspects naturally fall to be treated here.

The rules for prompt payment at funerals, noted in another connection, may well be supposed to have been called forth by poverty in an age when there were no insurances; but, curiously enough, the charges at baptisms and proclamations, when ignored, were ignored by those, rather, who felt themselves important enough to do so. And along with the entry in the special record are such notes as these:—"And the clerk and kirk officer got no payment," or "and the clerk gat nothing of his due," or "and the laird is own the clerks due with the former his children." Of those whose petty delinquencies are thus preserved like flies in amber, the one most frequently guilty shewed the same grippiness in an affair of much greater importance.

The charges made for proclamations were not the modest and consistent half-crown of the present day. A rule is quoted in the Minute of July 13, 1684: "The session hes enacted that non be married after this except they be thrise proclaimed, or else to pay to the poor a merk and to the clerk half-merk, if they uold have themselfs past with tuo proclaimings." The rivalry thus introduced would be good for the funds, but no information is given about the lesser charge for three proclamations; and the older volume does not help us, for, so far as has been noted, it states merely what the Clerk got—which in 1661 was eighteen shillings—and says nothing about the poor's portion.

Bequests for behoof of the poor have never been

awanting in the history of the church, and one sample is that minuted in "Januar 21 & 3d sabthe, 1672": "James widder hes payed that wholl sowme of 100 lib. left be wmqll [umwhile] Robert widder his brother mortified for the use of the poor."

I believe that within common recollection a man broke into the parish church expecting to find money there. He must have been a Rip Van Winkle from the seventeenth century who had never heard about banks and the modern distrustful habit of putting Church moneys in them week by week for security. Certainly in the seventeenth century he might have got something, for there were no banks of the modern type at that time, and none of any sort in a place like Alyth; and the church, so far from lodging its funds in the bank, was itself a bank in a modest way. This is another of the very varied functions which have entirely slipped out of her hands! But the Session acted as bankers merely in lending the surplus funds belonging to the poor, and these were lent on the security of bonds bearing interest at approximately four or five or six per cent. The last pages of the book, written by a new hand, have the modern terms, but elsewhere we always find "bands" and "annual-rent" —sometimes simply "annuals" or "annuall," words in which the initial "an" was regularly contracted into @.

Whether few or many, the bonds and other papers would be a nuisance if kept loose in the money box, hence (December 29, 1672) this payment—"Item to

Thomas Johnstown for ane box to keep the bands and pepers of the poor—5 shll." The price evidently excludes a lock, and this box may have been usually shut in the money box under charge of "the box-master"—an official mentioned on November 2, 1684. Before there was a separate place for the papers, we read (November 26, 1671) of 100 merks having been borrowed at Whitsunday, 1670, by Mr. John Fife, minister at Ruthven, and the bond having been "intrusted in the minister's hand, and he is to be good to the session for it."

Mr. Thomas Robertson, the young minister of Alyth, borrowed at the same time eighty merks, which he repaid in two years "and haid his band refeired him." And if at Candelmas, five years later, he borrowed 100 pounds, the need was no longer due to setting up house but probably to the purchase of property at Balhary.

The Clerk was also a borrower, doubtless in connection with his feu in the Lossetgate.

Sometimes the interest was not paid without a good deal of trouble. More than once we read of laggards being admonished from the pulpit to give it in. Nor were admonitions and threats always sufficient. Thus (December 26, 1669), "Ther was 4 lib. and 12 shll. taken owt of the box for registration of James Widders band and horning against him"—a measure which was instantly effectual, for the very next sentence states that "Elspet Alexander, James Widders wife, gave in 6 lib. of annualrent from witsonday, 1668, unto witsonday, 1669, and that of ane 100 lib. band he is

own to the poor." This was not the end of the trouble with him however, for (May 17, 1674) there was "given to thomas fife officer for chairging Thomas Brown and James Widder befor the sherriff against the first of June nixt, that they may be urged and compelled to pay to the session of all that they are own of the poors money."

In 1675 some persons had to be charged by Thomas Watson, officer, and in 1683 "Findla Cuthberd his band," which is first heard of ten years earlier, had to be registered at a cost of twenty-eight shillings. After a few weeks, William Balfour was paid ten shillings for charging him, and again the same officer had to be employed in 1686. The man's wish to be honest does not seem to be questioned, however, as in a few weeks "finlau Cudbard in Clauuhat having reneued his bond of 33 lib. 12 and given his son his cautioner," paid the interest of one pound seven shillings, which was duly "imboxt."

One or two others had to be firmly dealt with in the passing years, and in view of the great trouble and expense entailed through needy borrowers, it is not to be wondered at that the plan at length commended itself of investing the poor's money in a gallery to be let by pews for their behoof.

A list of all the "bonds and debts" at that date is given by the new Clerk in the Minute of June 17, 1686, when an inventory was drawn up for the satisfaction of Mr. John Lousone, reeently appointed minister; and though most of the persons who owed

money to the Session belonged to the parish, exceptions were—Mr. John Rattray, minister at Rattray, whose father, however, had been minister at Alyth; Alex. Campbell, in Dobhall; and John Nicoll, in Linross. But none of these owed large sums, and so very likely their debts were all for the hire of the mortcloth.

By searching the separate lists of baptisms, marriages, and funerals in Edinburgh, if that were thought worth while, one could possibly guess the debt for which rigour was enforced, when there were "4 sh. given to William Smith for arresting William Cants fie" (March 13, 1687).

From the preceding account, it is hoped that a fairly clear idea may be gained of the church finances of the period under review, and of the relative values of that time and ours; but the reader is referred to the other chapters for a survey of several subjects involving finance which have been merely mentioned here.

# THE COLLECTIONS.

One of the parts of the ordinary Church service whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity is the collection. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were, in a measure, collections paid in kind, but in the early Christian Church, so far as can be gathered from the New Testament, though charity was well organised, there is no direct proof one way or another whether collections were taken at the services. St. Paul's request to the Church at Corinth that each person should lay by him in store, on the first day of the week, for the poor members of the Mother Church at Jerusalem, in itself proves neither the existence of Sunday services nor of collections thereat, though the Apostle's advice and his purpose are hard to reconcile if the text is correct.

There came a time, however, when the Christians were able to meet in safety only by taking advantage of the privileges accorded in the Roman Empire to funeral associations; and as these were wont to take monthly contributions from their members, collections would in this way get a footing, if they had not already found a place in the Churches. From Tertullian,* who flourished at the end of the second century, A.D., and the beginning of the third, we learn

* *Apologeticus,* c. 39, quoted in Prof. Baldwin Brown's *From Schola to Cathedral.*

that such collections were actually taken in his day, but that there was no compulsion such as there was in the purely burial societies. And yet the eloquent Chrysostom, who was Archbishop of Constantinople about 400 A.D., casually implies the absence of alms-giving as part of the service within the Churches with which he was acquainted.* For he greatly encouraged the Christian people in a practice, which, as he says, had been established by their ancestors, of giving alms outside the church door to the poor who had been deliberately placed there to rouse the sympathy and receive the help of those who were coming to the service; and he enforced the duty by the Old Testament command that none should appear before the Lord empty, a command which must have been greatly in people's minds, and which no doubt had much to do with the development of the custom of having the alms collected within and distributed afterwards.

It is not necessary, however, to attempt to trace the growth of this custom further. Suffice it to say that in our old Session Book there is a record every Sunday of the amount "collected to the poor," and this was never missed (unless funds were being raised for some special purpose) except on March 7, 1686, when there was "no collection becawse the brod uas not given to the collector be the kirk officer." Whether that was a "thraw" or a "forget" is not said!

An "act," so called, of November 19, 1676, shews us the time at which the collection was usually taken:

* *Bingham's Antiquities*, p. 652.

"The members of the session thinks fitting that the collections whilk formerly was in the time of the singing of the psalms shal be heiraftr gon about befor the psalmes begin." It is manifest from this that one of the rules issued by the "Visitors of the Synod of Angus and Mearns" in 1649, which required "that ther be no collection for the poor in time of publik worshipe but that the collection be made at the kirk dore befor the people enter the publik assemblie," had ceased to be observed long ere 1676. On the Communion days, however, when there were as many as ten "Tables," one after the other, the collection was taken at the doors, and this departure from the common custom is usually noted with care in the Minutes.

One other peculiarity of the Communion collection was its large amount. On these days there were often more pounds given than on other days were given shillings. The collection was for the poor as usual, but whereas the average of the ordinary collections was about twenty-five shillings—more or less according to the numbers or the wealth or the generosity of those present—there would be contributed upwards of fifty pounds on the two Communion days, with two or three pounds added at the Thanksgiving Service on the Monday. Even now congregations probably contribute rather more under the stress of Sacramental feeling than at other times, not to speak of what is the mere result of their fuller attendance; but the remarkable disparity in those ancient days must surely shew either

a relic of old habit or some such arrangement as has been successfully made in Lintrathen, since the population decreased, in order to meet current expenses, whereby everybody puts silver in the plate, and largely half-crowns, on the Sacrament Sunday.

Since the Church collections were the ordinary source of aliment for the poor at that time, absence from the services was not merely desertion of ordinances but practically failure to pay poor rates. Accordingly, April 3, 1670, "The session hes enacted that those who collects the poor's offering shall wisit the tavern and ail howses in time of sermon that non be fownd absent from divin worship." These simple methods sufficed for the time, but when a century later dissenting Churches began to multiply and to be filled with well-to-do people who entirely escaped the support of the poor, it gradually came to be seen that the voluntary charity of the Church of Scotland must in all fairness give place to local rates.

The Special Collections, though not nearly so large as the Sacramental, were much better than the Ordinary ones, and they were taken, some of them, for objects which are now unusual, and some for objects which we should count very extraordinary indeed—though no doubt our Foreign, Jewish, Home, Colonial, and Endowment Schemes would have surprised them quite as much as their purposes surprise us.

For instance, it was not uncommon to have collections taken for individual persons in distress, and naturally so when there were no hospitals or institutions which

could receeive them, and which should themselves be largely supported by the alms of the Churches. Thus in the brief interval of fourteen years there were four if not five specially taken for cutting and "cureing" Cancer—one for James Barnat in 1669, one for Robt. Rendo, Kettins, in 1673, "to help to pay the chirurgion," one, along with the whole Presbytery, in 1681, for David Spalding, "owr parochiner," who had been operated on at "Montrosse," and very probably it was the same fell disease which required a special collection in December, 1684, for Elspet Edie, one of the Alyth poor "lying under the hands of Georg Grive chirurgean in dundie." The sums raised for these cases varied from four to ten pounds.

Instances of other kinds of distress calling for special collections, amounting to four or six pounds, were, in January, 1672, "for to nowrish a poor motherlese child and to helpe to bring it up"; in October, 1681, "for to help to nurish the fownd child," details of whose expenses upon the poor's box are given for several years after; and in March, 1685, "for ane honest old towns man James Salter," on September 7 of the previous year there had been "given to agnis salter ane honest old poor uoman this days collection uhilk is 31 shll," but it does not appear to have been previously intimated. On the other hand, that must have been specially taken which on March 5, 1682, was "given to John Osburn in name of John Reddell broken merchant in Edinburgh who has the cowncell's order for a general collection."

That the Church in those days included in its many functions the part now taken by insurance societies may be seen from several special collections. Thus on July 24, 1670, a sum of ten pounds four shillings and eightpence was collected for "Kilmarno," which, as stated in the intimation, "was burnt and ruined by fyr." Kilmarnock is now very large and wealthy, but in 1667, when it was wholly destroyed, it contained only 120 families, who were poor already because soldiers had been quartered on them, and who, by this disaster, were left homeless and destitute. In June, 1684, a collection of twenty-four pounds was taken "at the kirk doors for kelso" which perhaps shews where all the special collections were gathered. Now Kelso was anciently the most unfortunate town in Scotland in respect of fire. It had been repeatedly burnt down by the English and also by incendiaries; but the fire of March, 1684, by which it was totally destroyed, was an accidental one. It will be noticed that there was none of our modern hysterical haste in making the collection, and a sidelight is cast on the manners and customs of the time by the fact that already by the 4th of May a beggar, "Nicolas Sinkler uho hade her howse burnt at Kelso," had been round and had got six shillings. And if there was no hurry in gathering the money, there was less in disposing of it, for not till the last day of November do we read: "Ther uas 24 lib. formerlie gathered and collected for kelso sent to Mr. Henrie Malcolm to be delivered." Doubtless the money was sent through the minister of

Bendochy, because he was Moderator of Presbytery, and had been so for some years; but the absence of a convenient postal system was exhibited by the necessity of employing the beadle at a charge of four shillings and fourpence to carry both it and the annual bursary to "Benethie."

These last two collections would be made, like the previous one, by order of the Privy Council; but the Presbytery, too, took a hand in these things, and by its behest a collection was "gathered" on 10th April, 1681, for David Lindsay, who had his house burnt.

Other disasters and necessities besides those due to fire called forth special efforts. Thus on June 26, 1670, there was one made, "be vertue of ane act of Parliament" as we are afterwards told, "for helping those who gat great loss and skeithe throw the violent and impetows wind on October last at and in the town of Dundie." Nine pounds were got on that day, and on the next Sabbath five pounds more from those who had not already given, and this was made up to sixteen pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence, when it was sent away, a full year after the disaster. On March 24, 1678, there was intimated the Government's order "concerning the general collection for some montrose men taken with the turk at targirs." It was the Algerian pirates who were described by the name of "Turk," and sixteen pounds six shillings were raised in Alyth for redeeming their prisoners. Nothing is said of the delivery of the money.

There was published also on April 29, 1683, the "order for a general collection for repairing the herberie of aberdon" and "for bigging a bridge upon the uater of Leven." At that period, Aberdeen was the greatest seaport in Scotland with the exception of Leith, and the channel was often blocked by a constantly changing bank of sand, which was not cured till 1780. Though this order was published in April, the actual collection was not announced till the 23rd September, when a third object was added, viz., "Hairtfoord," and a week later fourteen pounds twelve shillings were got and sent to "the towns and places foirsaid." At the name of Hartford one naturally thinks of the early settlements in Connecticut and has visions of Indian destructions to be restored, but after many vain inquiries, the truth has been found quite at hand in the Presbytery Records. Not for Hartford but for Rosehartie harbour was the collection made, yet perhaps we may infer that Hartford was more familiar to the Clerk's mind than Rosehartie.

Yet another special collection, made in June, 1687, was "to help Ensteruther peer," and on July 17, "the minister gave in the clerk of the presbetries receipt for the 4 lib 15 sh that was collected for Amster peer," thus shewing the Presbytery's responsibilities in such matters.

So far as we in Alyth are concerned, the most interesting group of the special collections has been kept for the last, namely, those relating to our local bridges. On June 2, 1672, "the minister did intimat

a eolleetion for the bridges upon the Burn within the towne of alyth"—a lapse on the part of the Clerk into what we may eall the eorreet spelling of the name—and next Sunday "ther was Colleeted for the mending of the bridges 5 lib 4 shll.," while in the following week is the record of three pounds two shillings "given to David ffentowne and John Lamb measones for mending the Litle Bridge."

Though the wording of the intimation seems to imply the existenee of more town bridges than one over the Alyth Burn even at that date, proof will be found in a later Minute, to be shortly quoted, that there was but one; and the "little bridge" must therefore have been that whieh was built in 1642, "pendit ower the burn eallit Drondoheie making ane suffieient bow of sex fitts of breed," not far from the larger and older bridge whieh still survives. The streamlet spanned by the little bridge is now mostly ealled the Johnshill Burn, but its old name is not quite forgotten; nor is it forgotten that the first brae on the Johnshill Road, whieh is nearly opposite Beowlum's Howe, was anciently the Drondoehie Brae. The streamlet, so named, after losing some of its waters by a diversion above Johnshill to benefit Balhary, now flows underground from Pitnaeree mill-wheel and falls into the Alyth Burn quite near the Bamff Road, but manifestly its former eourse must have taken it farther down—down below our aneient bridge, indeed, thereby eutting off aeeess to and from the south in time of

flood, and rendering a small supplementary bridge a great convenience both for kirk and market.

The next mention of the Little Bridge, after those already quoted, is on January 14, 1677, when five shillings were "given to the messon for helping" it. Then in the last week of September of the same year other seven pounds were raised for its repair. And on the 5th of May following we find the statement:— "Given to John Lam for the reparation of the litle bridge this day 40 shll. whilk with 6 lib formerly given in all 8 lib satisfies him." While on January 22, 1688, the same mason got twelve shillings for the same purpose. On the former occasion his two assistants got seventeen shillings and fourpence.

Meanwhile the other bridge, built we know not when, and still in daily use by foot passengers, but "dekaing" and "liklie to fall" in June, 1644, repaired in 1646, decaying again in 1666 and 1667, and duly mended, had its turn of attention. On May 24, 1674, "The session considering the decaying and failing of the bridge of the burn of alight, have thowght fitting that 4 be nominat for visiting and sighting the samin this week, and these are they following wiz: John Ramsay of miln of quiche John Crokat James sowtor and John adamson withe William Ramsay bailzie and the time to be on fryddie the morning be 8 howres." That Friday was Restoration Day and King Charles' birthday, and there was a service in church at any rate. The men appointed met at the bridge accordingly "taking some

Old Bridge of Alyth.

See page 150.

skilfull men with them," and reported to the Session on the Sunday "that the expenses wold be abowt 40 lib for the repairing of it." A collection was duly intimated on the Sunday following, and there were gathered on June 14, 1674, "at the kirk doors for the bridge 19 merks and half."

I believe that traces of that repairing are still visible. Above the central pier of the old bridge there is a coat of arms, partly effaced, a rubbing of which shews it to be that of the Ramsays; and at the sides of the base of the shield are the letters V R, which are probably the initials of the Baron Bailie of 1674—William Ramsay. The form of the shield suits the period, and about that time W and V were often interchanged. An instance of this is found in the very Minute which records the "sighting" of the bridge, where it introduces the names of the visiting committee, and in a deed of confirmation, of date 1670, in favour of Thomas Irland, the Session Clerk, for lands off the "Lossetgeat," one man is "witnes" while the next is "vitness." The arms and initials might therefore quite well be those of William Ramsay, the Baron Bailie of 1674. It is true they might be a relic of the building of the bridge, not of that grand repairing, and they might celebrate some unknown Vincent Ramsay (let us say) who caused it to be built. But taking all things into account, the balance seems to be in favour of the theory here propounded, and we may well believe that our old bridge, which is second in antiquity only to the Old Arches, and perhaps only

to the east end of them, retains the marks of the repair for which a special collection was taken in 1674.

That quaint, narrow bridge with no companion, where there are now so many, except one over the tributary burn, had then and had till almost within living memory no parapets; and in our mind's eye we can see the kind of traffic which that implies. It bespeaks an antique world in which people travelled on foot, and were content with a narrow path across a stream; and in which the burdens too great to be carried on the arm or the back were conveyed by pack-horses of small size, whose wont was to ford the shallows except in times of flood, and whose side creels would then have been incommoded by the bridge parapets that are now regarded as a necessary safeguard.

So much for the collections taken in Alyth Parish Church within these two decades of the seventeenth century. Their details give us an interesting glimpse of the Alyth and the Scotland of long ago, and help to shew us how the Church of those days was such a power in the land.*

* See Appendix for Bridge of Room.

# THE MORTCLOTH.

While the ordinary collections, after deduction of current and necessary charges, were the fountain and chief supply for the needs of the poor, there were various other sources of income on their behalf. One of these was the morteloth, which was hired out at funerals. In those days there were no cheap mountings to be had for coffins, nor were there any hearses or wheeled carts to give so much as a partial concealment to them—they had to be borne on spokes from the recent home of the dead to the long home in the graveyard by way of farm and croft and crowded street, and so it was seemly to have the plain blackened wooden box covered with a handsome velvet morteloth. And time out of mind the right to let these out for hire rested solely with Kirk Sessions, or, sometimes, jointly with Corporations, and many a legal fight has been fought in Scotland over this privilege.

The first mention of a morteloth in our volume is in the Minute of August 14, 1670: "given to James Sowtor owt of the box six lib. sterling for to help to buy a morclothe and fowr lib. sterling that he hes in his hand received from James Widder." The second notice occurs three weeks later, when there was "given to David Smythe tylior 8 shll. for going to St jonston

to buy frynzies to the morclothe." And a fortnight after it is stated that to the same tailor was given "for his work and making of the new moorclothe five merks and 8 shll. scots and to his two menservants 12 shll.," while David Forrester got 24 shillings "for making a wallat to the new moorclothe." That it was "new" not as being newly made, but as contrasted with an old one, is shewn by the statement on November 6 of the same year that the "mending of the old moreclothe" cost eight shillings.

At first not much more than half the price had been paid for the material, and at the end of November James Sowtor got twenty shillings "for his travell and expenses" in taking the remaining 107 pounds twelve shillings to "Stionston," while on December 4 the full cost is detailed at 239 pounds fifteen shillings Scots whereof James Sowtor first and last conveyed payment of 227 pounds, and of this portion of the whole cost it is added that "this is the dowble [*i.e.*, an exact copy] of the tiket written and subscribit be his own hand and given in to the session be the said James."

A fine mortcloth was often hired for funerals in other parishes, and it may very likely have been because of the fame of the Alyth one that we get the next light cast on its history. On February 7, 1675, there was "given to david smith kirk officer 6 shll for being in the highland with the mortcloth and his son waiting upon his chairg"; and on May 2 following there was "given to James Smithe the kirk officer's

son 2 shll. for waiting upon his faither's chairg whil he returnd owt of atholl with the morteloth"; and again on April 15, 1683, the kirk officer got "10 shll. for careing the mortelothe to persie rattray his corps." These are only casual references due to some payment other than the hires which were all recorded elsewhere, but that the Alyth morteloth was sought after from outside and was in one of these cases charged at a rate of three pounds Scots is shewn by a statement on June 17, 1686, that "for the use of the mortcloth tuice," Mr. John Rattray, minister at Rattray, was "resting," *i.e.*, owing, six pounds.

Within the parish it was not open to have the mortcloth for a funeral or not to have it: it had to be used, or, at least, it had to be paid for sooner or later, though it must be confessed there is no such assertion made in the volume under review. For anything there stated, voluntary hirers may have been struck at on February 17, 1678, when the minister "made public intimation that all those who are resting the annual-rents of the poors money, or for the mortelothe wold bring it in to the session betuixt this and pascha or thereabowt or otherwais they may expect to be persued according to rigowr"—a threat at last enforced in November, when there was paid "to David Smith officer for charging those who were ouing for the morteloth and James ogilvy with him 12 shll."

By the end of December, 1679, according to another hand which reverts to a spelling less accordant with the derivation, the sum "gottin for the use of the

morcloath since it was coft" was "363 lib. 15 shll 04d and imboxit," so that in nine years it had paid for itself and brought in £124 Scots of clear profit.

The ordinary home charge is not stated in the book as we now have it; except that in the less formal notes at the end of the volume one entry (December, 1698) is "14 sh. given in for the use of the mortcloth to John Froster's corps," and another (October, 1699) is "on lib. given in for the mortcloath to James Huntar."

Obviously, such an income as that mentioned above implies a large use, and small yearly mendings from March, 1679 (requiring silk for the purpose), tell the same story. By January 14, 1683, a thorough overhaul was evidently required for "on mownday last ther (were) som of the members of the session with the minister that mett concerning the mortclothe having browght some tailors to see uhat is to be had for repairing and mending of it. It is fownd to stand in neid of 3 ells of velvet clothe and half, at half ell and naill broad, and 5 ell of broad frynzie." This quantity would seem to have been thought too expensive, but the need of three mendings that year must have shewn the necessity of getting a new one, and on May 4, 1684, David Smith received ten shillings "for bringing the new mortclothe owt of Dundie; . . . for the uhich ther uas given 129 lib." A new "uallet" got in October at the cost of sixteen shillings completed the outfit.

A small mending of "the" mortcloth in July of that year would seem to imply that the old one was

not expected to be used any more, but it was not given away, for when an inventory of the Church possessions was being set down, under date June 17, 1686, at the settlement of a new minister "there uas found . . . tuo mortcloths."

If the above-mentioned mending, as seems probable, was of the new and much cheaper cloth got in Dundee, it is ominous of its quality that a repair was so soon required, and if that might be due to accident, another mending of "the mortcloth" by Margaret Douglish, so early as January 30, 1687, at a cost of one pound four shillings, with nine shillings and eightpence to "William Matheu for silk and buttons" confirms the omen. But it must be confessed that perhaps the old one was being patched up for use at a cheaper rate.

Once more mention is made of the Dundee mortcloth on January 29, 1688, when it is stated that ninety-one pounds ten shillings having been advanced "by James Miller in Alyth in name of John and Thomas Eduards in Alyth" for its purchase "with no receipt then granted, it is nou given by John Crockatt and Will: Matheu with consent of the session."

The new Session Clerk began in 1688 to enter in the Minutes the payments for the use of the mortcloth at funerals, and as this was practically a record of deaths in the parish, the pages were taken out of the volume by the Registrar-General at the passing of the

Registration Act and kept in Edinburgh, where all further particulars must be sought.

At the rate of life shewn by the first mortcloth, there must have been many new ones in Alyth before they were finally given up, well within living memory, for newer fashions in funeral styles and customs; but, to be sure, they would last longer when new means of transport brought country funerals to the churchyard gate before there was need for the antique covering.

The subject stirs a melancholy and archaic recollection in many a breast of "old unhappy far-off things," and this may well excuse any undue prolixity about the first, or almost the first, mortcloths that were used by our Alyth forbears.

# THE DISTRIBUTION TO THE POOR.

The account already given of the church collections contained sufficient details of those taken specially for individuals in misfortune, but it requires to be supplemented by a more minute narrative of the expenditure from the ordinary collections, and other regular sources of revenue, on those who required succour of any sort.

Recipients were generally named, but sometimes no more was set down than their description: "ordinars," "extraordinars," "supplicants," "distressed," "sick," "passengers," "beggars," etc.—classes which were doubtless distinct but not always exclusive of each other.

The "ordinar poor" got their grant at church about once a month, though very occasionally a month seems to have been slipped. The plan of frequently varying the Sunday must have made sure of their general attendance. No doubt an elder or a deacon would convey the money where there was necessity for it, but apparently there had to be real necessity, for we find individuals now and then mentioned on odd Sundays, and once at least when half the poor were absent, perhaps because of stormy weather, there follows the suggestive entry: "item to the rest of the poor who were not here the last day wiz to ———."

Upon a review of fifteen years, we discover that as a rule the sum given monthly to each of the "ordinars" was four shillings (Scots); but the rule was not cast iron at any time, and after the Lord's Supper, when there was always a very large collection, they were made "passing rich" by the receipt of six shillings or even more.

A measure of reform or what was conceived to be such was introduced on the first Sunday of October, 1684:—"This day the session taking to ther consideration the condition of the poor in the paroche, and finding that som uho travells and can doe more for ther Livelihood then others, oft times gets as muche as those who stands in greater necessitie, Therfor the minister and members of session in ther severall quarters taking notice of the poor in ther quarters have given them up as followes in three ranks; and that they shall get ther alms in the first sabbathe in evrie monethe wiz: in the first rank: Jean Thomson cripl and blind, Elspet stowp cripl and blind. Issobell Peter blind. Isobell Fife blind. Followes the 2d rank wiz: ——: evrie on in the first rank gat 4 shill this day—and evrie on in the 2d gat 3 shll 4d: and those in the 3d rank follows, John Mulloche gat 10 shll," etc. The third rank, however, seldom got more than the second, and only about half as often.

The sorest drain on the poor's fund through a number of years was due to "the fownd child" for whom, as formerly mentioned, a special collection was taken in October, 1681, and for whom provision had thereafter

to be made out of the regular funds. It appears from the slightly fuller aeeount given in the Baptismal Record that this was "a uoman ehild fownd at James forresters door in Uest quarter the 12 of Oetobr and baptised be owr minister 30 be direetion and advice of the prisbyterie uho uas ealled Sara." She was put into the charge of Janat M'herberie who was doubtless the person of that name admitted as one of the "ordinar poor" in Oetober, 1651, "vhose husband was taken at the onfall of the town of Alyt" on August 28 of that year by Col. Alured—"a swift Colonel of Monk's," as Carlyle characterises him in this conneetion. Janet's bargain was to get six pounds for the first quarter. Throughout the following year the quarterly payments (after eorrection of elerical errors) amounted to six pounds six shillings and eightpence; but with the advent of 1683 there seems to have been some rearrangement, for the "nurisher of the fownd child" got only one recorded payment of "3 lib 3 shll 4d for this instant quarter." Certainly a more drastic change than the halving of the maintenance began on April 1, on whieh day we read that "Janat m'herberie and the session hes agreied coneerning the fownd wiz: that she shall nurish and keep it for a year for 8 lib and a pare of shoes." It is only fair to add that a month later Janat got no less than "20 shll for her promist shoon, anent the child," whereas twelve or at most sixteen shillings was the priee. The aliment was raised to ten pounds a year from "rudday," 1684. "Rood day" is May 3, and it commemorates the sup-

posed discovery in 326 A.D. of the holy rood, or cross on which our Lord was crucified. It is a day quite forgotten in the calendar of Alyth, but on asking an old dweller in Glenisla whether it was remembered there, he replied, "drolling" like Unele Toby: "Bless me, that is the time when the witches fly over the hills on broomsticks and sail on Loch Brandy in riddles!" He added, however, that none but the aged had ever heard of it.

If the found child had become famous in after life, we might search for further details of her infant career in the Session Book, but rather for the sake of the word than of herself we note that at the age of three and a half she had "the nirls," which, I believe, were German measles.

Another item seems to fall within the scope of expenditure upon the "ordinars" although as in the last case it is not expressly said to do so, viz: "to William Matheu merchant for naills tobaceo and pipes for the use of the poor 8 sh 6d" (June 3, 1688).

Into this select band, which rarely exceeded a dozen and was occasionally as few as five, one sometimes got by application, recorded in some such form as this: "Patrick Malcolm gave in a bill to the session desiring him to be inrolled amongst the number of the ordinar poor, qlk was aceepted and obeied" or "Issobell Moriss gave in a bill desiring to be inrolled amongst the ordinar poor qlk was accepted, and her suit granted". At other times one was promoted to this security from being an "extraordinar."

Cases requiring relief other than those of the ordinary poor eame before the Session at any service; and they came from all quarters, and in considerable numbers. Naturally many of these applications were partly or wholly due to illness, indicated in such terms as these:—"given to a distressed person Issobell Rait 24 shll," "given to Hendrie Blair ane distressed gintleman 12 shll," "item to ane siek old person Mt. Butchert 6 shll," "to Georg Small supplicant in Cowper diseased of a great hulcer 20 shll." A few were helped beeause they were eripple, or hurt, or "dum," and more beeause they were blind. One poor woman in 1683 got fourteen shillings beeause she had "a blind child going in to dundie to be cured," and another patient got "18 shll for to help to pay chirurgions for euring his sore eyes." Surgical cases were indeed plentiful. More than once somebody had to be "eut of a stone," one required to have a lump eut off his brow, once "ther was taken owt of the box and given to ane poor lad a supplicant for to help him to get ane exerescens cutted from off his eye 40 shll." And a number of grants were given in eonnection with cancer, partieularly to David Spalding, whose name appeared months before his presbyterial collection, and does not disappear for about a year after it. It is painful to remember the agonies these people must have endured in the surgeon's hands when as yet chloroform was unknown.

A curious instanee of an old superstition conneeted with the Crown is reeorded in the list of disbursements

on June 2, 1672: "given to John fair weather a supplicant going to the king to be cured of the Cruels 12 shll." Evidently John was afflicted by Scrofula, or King's Evil—so called because the touch of the King was supposed to heal it. Charles II., to whom the invalid was begging his way, exceeded all the sovereigns before or after in the practice—touching as he did more than 92,000 persons between the years 1660 and 1682. It is interesting to recall that some forty years or so after John Fairweather's journey Samuel Johnson was carried to London in his early boyhood to be touched by Queen Anne—from which no good effects followed—and that perhaps the last instance in our history of belief in the royal cure occurred in "the '45" when Charles Edward touch an afflicted child at Holyrood.

A good many besides those for whose behoof special collections were taken got help because they had had their house "brunt," or, occasionally, their goods; and this feelingly reminds us not less of the absence of insurance than of the prevalence of thatched dwellings. Supplicants who had had this misfortune came from a long distance: (February, 1675) "given to halliburton vho had his houses brunt at edinburgh 13 shll 4d"; (February, 1678) "— to James and agnis scot James murray and agnis Johnstown supplicants who had ther howses brunt at glasgow 30 shll"; (November, 1678) "— to John duncan who had his howse brunt in ireland 18 shll"; (October, 1682) "— to John Robertson supplicant uho

had his howse burnt at leith 28 shll." But there were others under the same misfortune either from unnamed places—perhaps from Alyth itself—or else from parishes not very far off—*e.g.*, (February 2, 1679) "to James Mill in the parioehin of glenaylae who hed his howse presently brunt 24"; (October 31, 1680) "— to John bowman schoolmaster at Glenprossen having his howse burnt 58 shll."

All sorts and eonditions of men were among the miscellaneous reeipients. We may note grants given in 1670 to "passangers and sowldiers on the King's serviee 24 shll"; and "to ane sowldier 6 shll." Soldiers got help also in 1672 and 1674, and after that several offieers got assistance, being more generously treated, as became their rank. On August 1, 1680, there was paid "to Gairn Leivtennant 30 shll." One wonders whether this was the "master Gairn supplieand" who got eighteen shillings three years earlier, but it would not be the "supplieant John gairn" who got other thirty shillings three weeks later. We may assume that it was a military "Capitan John mwrishon, recomended be the bishiops," who got two merks on the same day as John Gairn was assisted, and also that the Captain John Ogilvy who was a supplieant two years afterwards and got two pounds sixteen shillings was in the army or had been.

Sailors or traders by sea came in also for sympathy and help. Four shillings were given to "a distressed seaman" in 1673, eight to "ane sea broken man" in

1677, twelve to "a ship-broken man" in 1678, and in 1680 eight to "a broken seaman." But of this group the most interesting, because the most characteristic of the age, were the sufferers from Algerian pirates. We are not informed (August 10, 1679) how much was "given to a supplicant who was a grecian and duck in the Isle Samos mercurius by name havin a printed recommendation from the cownsel to get som persons relived taken by the turk at tangirs." The man here named was Mercurius Lascary, a Greek priest. On December 23, 1683, there was "given to tuo men relived from the turks slavrie 14 shll," and on June 8, 1684, "to Robert Drummond uhose son hes been under the turkish gaillies—20 shll." On September 20, 1685, there was "given to John Riddell supplicant uho hes hade great losses upo sea and takin by the turk, and hes his recommendation from the king, and cownsell and bishiop 4 lib scots." No doubt this was the broken merchant in Edinburgh who got a general collection by the Privy Council's order in 1682.

Prisoners within the bounds of Scotland were also succoured. In October, 1673, twenty-nine shillings Scots were taken out of the box "for to be given to Patrick Blair supplicant presently lying in the tolboothe in Perthe." And on March 2, 1684, there was "given to James Campbell of Lergus supplicant uho hes been prisoner in Perth these 9 years bygon —56 shll."

Ministers and their relatives were sometimes in need

of help:—(May 12, 1672) "Item to Mt. Hosin who was a minister's wyfe—12 shll." (June 3, 1677) "item to mt Lindsay daughter to the minister of aberlemnoe—9 shll." (May 14, 1687) "given to a minister daughter 10 sh 6d." (December 24, 1682) "given to mr andro aiton ane old man somtime minister in galloway supplicant—56 shll." (October 4, 1685) "Mr Iruin a supplicant minister gat a rex dollor." There is no trace of Andro Aiton in Hew Scott's *Fasti*, but probably the other minister was Alexander Irving, A.M., who in 1661 resigned the parish of Longside in the Presbytery of Deer for conscience sake when King Charles II. imposed Episcopal government on the Church of Scotland.

Occasionally others besides ministers, who enjoyed the title of "Mr"—still probably applied to university graduates alone—got a grant from the poor's box. For instance, on April 2, 1671, Mr. John Langlands "ane yowng man seeking a place for to teache yowng children" received six shillings, a sum doubled the week after. In December, 1685, Mr. James Clerk, a schoolmaster, who had his house burnt, got fourteen shillings. It is not mentioned what or who was Mr. Robert Macintosh who got three pounds in May, 1687, and the same sum a year later under the name of Mr. Robert Malcomtosh.

Mr. William Ogilvy got forty shillings in November, 1671, by order of the Presbytery, and this introduces us to another group, namely to those who came round with orders, recommendations, or testi-

monials, of whom some have already been instanced. Mr. William Ogilvy's is the only case noted of an "order" not said to be for a special collection, but the authorities who issued "orders" also gave "recommendations." A supplicant student recommended by the Presbytery got two pounds two shillings in 1686, and in 1674 "James Yowng recomended be the presbyterie of dunkeld" got twenty-four shillings, while a year later there was given to a supplicant having a recommendation from "brechen whose surname is ——— Scroll 6 shll"—a recommendation which, to all appearance, had not done him much good, since a certain "William Watson mercheant in brechen" had got rather more a few months earlier without any word of such a thing. Still William Watson, doubtless, had some unrecorded reference. In October, 1681, "John ueems uho had the synod's recomendation" got twenty shillings. In July, 1678, there was "given to John Lithel who hes ane ample testificat from the ministers of edinburg and glasgow 2 lib. 16 shll." To be added also is Antonie Scrimgeor who had "a testimonial from Ireland," and got thirteen shillings and fourpence in 1676.

The close connection which existed between Scotland and Ireland after the plantation of Ulster is illustrated by more than one of the incidents already quoted, and the same is shewn in August, 1672, by the grant of six shillings to a supplicant schoolmaster in Ireland, and of thirteen shillings a month later to John Hay

"going to Ireland." Connection with England is much less apparent in this list. "Item to Tailior inglishman supplicant 7 shll" (April 20, 1684) is perhaps the one instance; and if so, there is quite as much evidence of contact with France, for on December 25, 1681, "Alex Gordon & John anderson north cowntrie men from france" got twelve shillings.

There are great numbers of cases of poor relief which do not come into any of these groups, and, though it is very difficult to choose between them sometimes in point of interest, a final few may be quoted in order of time:—

April 2, 1671—"given to ane criple woman and to Thomas Alexander for to help her owt of the town 18 sh"—quite a canny plan! but common all over the country, and repeated in Alyth eleven months later—repeated also, it would seem, in December, 1672, for there were then "given to William wightown for the leading and guiding of Thomas Thain a blind man—8 shll to buy a pare of shoes." The Session shewed the same business capacity with good effect a few years later when a certain "extraordinar" came before them for the second time:—"to James Suan 12 shll to buy an pect of meale vho promised never to seek more out of the session."

April 28, 1678—"given to ane old man of ane 110 zears John Smith by name 10 shll." Whether they had any more than his word for his age is not said.

October 23, 1681—"given to a supplicant William Sluan uho uas robbed in the uay—6 shll." Footpads

and highwaymen were out for their harvest in these "good old days," and indeed in England the most famous of them flourished about that time. Claude Duval was only some ten years past, and Swift Nick Nevison had yet three years to go before being hanged.

December 31, 1682—"given to andro Steill supplicant somtime Ieonomows in old colledge of St androws 30 shll." The affection of the minister and Session Clerk for their *alma mater* may possibly be seen in this grant.

December 5, 1686—"to buy a barrou to Janet Finlauson 6 sh." They were giving sums of six shillings that day, and this hardly proves the priee of barrows, so we need not enquire what kind could be supplied for this sum.

It will have been noticed that the sums given to supplieants are sometimes curious in amount, *e.g.*, "33 sh. 4d." It is evident that members of Session were thinking in merks and had deeided to give two and a half. Even when they gave "40 sh" they may have been thinking of three merks rather than two pounds.

It will have been noticed also that the sums given vary greatly. In a few cases we have ineidentally suggested reasons for the greater or less amount given to this or that person, but often we have no means of judging. Why, for instanee, should Hendrie Barklie get but twelve shillings in July, 1670, while a fortnight later John Baslie got forty? Was there differenee in need, or rank, or loeal eonneetion? The personal

element must have counted for much where there were no definite rules except for the "ordinar poor."

To complete the list of grants from the poor's fund, a brief mention must be made of those given to cover funeral expenses. These included "wynding sheets," "kists" or "chists," "expenses wared upon" the dead, "bureing," etc. Thus (1675) there was "given to help to bury a poor man vho was a stranger died in redlakae 6 shll." Evidently this was one of the numerous class of wandering beggars. An item of 1680 seems to imply a wake: "given to pay for candle and expenses to Janat Haknae her buriall—12 shll." A very expensive case belonged to 1683 when there was "given to James Dein wright for making a chist to James Wilson's corps, a murderson person—3 lib." If this was not the sturdy beggar who, according to tradition frequented the Mill of Blacklaw and terrorised farmers and erofters into putting meal without fail in the poke hung for him behind the door, the two would appear to have been similar both in size and in character and not far removed in time.

It is fortunate that in every case where the name of the dead is recorded it is also entered in the separate list in Edinburgh, else we might have had difficulty in claiming the Session Minutes for our own possession.

This old system of poor administration was a very cheap one, since it cost not a penny for machinery, and it could be a very good one, as Dr. Chalmers shewed long after in St. John's Parish, Glasgow; but our ecclesiastical divisions made it unworkable, and

the State was obliged to take the administration into its own hands. Since that time, the State has had a growing sense of its own duty, and no healing of schism in the Church could recover this powerful weapon for her hands. But the Church has still her useful part to play in the help of the poor in cases which are exceptional, and sometimes in supplementing the doles of the poor law, and she will never be wanting in charitable help while she is inspired by the spirit of her founder and Lord.

# THE BURSARS.

By gift or bequest, there are now plenty of bursaries for those who require assistance to help them through the Divinity Classes of the Universities, but in the first centuries of Protestantism these were lacking, while the prevailing poverty made the need even greater than at present.

Accordingly the General Assembly of 1641 and years following required Presbyteries of twelve ministers to contribute annually 100 pounds (Scots) from kirk penalties to provide bursaries, while smaller Presbyteries were ordained to combine for this purpose, so that willing students of small means might be enabled to study for the ministry, and that parish pulpits might not be left vacant for lack of preachers. Our old records shew that Alyth did its due part in this matter. By the time our second volume begins there was a new form of Church government, it is true; but the bursaries were as needful as ever, and a quotation from the Presbytery Register of 17th November, 1668, recording the suggestions of a committee and their acceptance, will shew what changes of plan and procedure occurred in the new time: "Anent the bursarie the brethren appointed mett at Cowpar, who thougt yt ane hundred merks for this

and all years coming might be a competent provision out of so many kirks, which being represented to the bishop and he satisfied with it the presbyterie did appoint yt the foresaid sume to which all aggreed should be divided amongst the several kirks as folloues to be payd to wit out of

| | |
|---|---|
| Elitt, ... ... ... | 8 lib. |
| Cowpar, ... ... | 6 lib. |
| Ketnis, ... ... | 6 lib. |
| Benethie, ... ... | 6 lib. |
| Blair, ... ... ... | 6 lib. |
| Airlie, ... ... | 6 lib. |
| Glenyla, ... ... | 5 lib. |
| Megill, ... ... | 5 lib. |
| Newtyll, ... ... | 5 lib. |
| Essie, ... ... ... | 4 lib. |
| Kingoudrum, ... | 4 lib. |
| Glentrathen, ... ... | 4 lib. |
| Ruthwen, ... ... | 1 lib. 13s 4d." |

In accordance with this arrangement, which gives us an idea of the relative population and wealth of these parishes at that time, we find from our own Session Records that Mr. William Malcolm, or, as he would now be styled, "William Malcolm, M.A.," was paid "owt of the box" eight pounds on the 21st November, 1669, "for the 4th and last zeir."

In 1671 and 1672 there are recorded payments to Mr. John Robertson, "son to Dunie," synod's bursar,

and in 1673 the annual eight pounds Scots are given to Mr. Gilbert Crokat.

The bursar for the next year was called Ogilvy, but his christian name was unknown to the Clerk, and the absence of "Mr." shews that he was not a Master of Arts, or that the Clerk was in ignorance of the fact. The Presbytery Records, however, prove him to have been Mr. George.

From Martinmas, 1674, to Martinmas, 1678, Mr. James Paton (Patton, 1678) received the bursary, and thereafter Mr. William Rait (or Raitt) held it for a like period.

For the next four years to Martinmas, 1686, the bursar was Mr. William Many (or Manie), and the last mentioned in the book was "Mr Henry fyff presbetrie bursar," who received his second payment just before the Revolution of 1688.

A large proportion of these men were from the manses of the Presbytery, and if their subsequent careers were considered of interest, details might no doubt be got from Hew Scott's *Fasti* with no great trouble, but a little may be inferred from our own Session Book about some of them. In 1683, and again in 1685 and 1686 and 1687, Mr. James Patton, minister at Kettins, preached in Alyth. He was the former bursar, and he was his father's successor in Kettins.

Mr. William Manie was an "Expectant," that is to say a "Licentiate" or "Probationer," in 1686, 1687, and 1688, in which years he is mentioned as filling the

pulpit of Alyth on a few occasions, on one of which his name is spelt Menie.

It may be worth mentioning here that Mr. Thomas Robertson himself had been Synod bursar, and had received payments from Alyth a few years before he became minister of the parish, and consequently before the beginning of our second volume of Minutes.

In addition to supporting a bursar, the Church of Alyth, it ought to be added, sometimes encouraged the higher learning in a small way out of the poor's box. On December 19, 1669, the Minute reads "to Jon Kid in airlie a yowng poor lad going to the colledg 30 shll," and on March 22, 1674, "Given to Jon Kid a student who intends to be lawried the nixt year supplicating for som help—26 shll 8d." Let us hope he duly attained his degree. On April 23, 1676, we read "given to John broun poor scholar to buy a quair of paper 5 shll"; and on November 26th of the same year "given to John Anderson a young scholar follouing his book at the colledge—12 shll." On November 7, 1686, there was "given to a supplicant a student recommended by the presbetrie 2 lib. 2 sh."

These benefactions and bursaries tell us of a poor country struggling to supply her need of an educated ministry as best she could, and of the unquenchable thirst for learning she found in many of her poorest sons.

# PART III.

## THE BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS.


THE OLD ARCHES—AN ARCADE IN THE OLD CHURCH.

From Photo. by John B. Maclachlan.

See page 179.

# THE OLD CHURCH.

No stranger can visit Alyth without being struck by the view of "The Old Arches" standing picturesquely above the newer town; and greatly ought we to value them, not only because they lend a touch of distinction to the scene, but because they are all that remain of the ancient Parish Church in which for centuries the forefathers of all our denominations worshipped God.

A closer view of the ruin shews that old though the arches be, they are modern in comparison with the piece of wall at the east end of them, which is however finished off with modern crowsteps, substituted for its frail upper corner when the church was taken down. This piece of wall, which was within the last church, is part of the exterior North wall of the edifice as it existed prior to the erection of the arches. Several proofs of this may be observed, but it is most clearly shown by the half-built-up window, plain, narrow and tall, which is crushed against the first arch in such a way as to prove that the arches were an innovation on the plan of which it formed part. The existence of an ambry on the Southern side of this ancient piece of wall, where it is half filled by the top of a marble tomb, proves further that we have left to us the East end of the North exterior wall of the more ancient

church, bounding the side of the chancel and adjacent to the altar. That church had been oblong in shape, about 80 feet long by 24 feet broad, and when at the Reformation the attendance at public worship greatly increased, the church had been enlarged by removing the greater part of the North wall back some thirteen feet and putting in the arches where it had formerly stood as an arcade to sustain the roof. These measurements were originally given on the very likely assumption that the modern walls surrounding the Bamff and the ministers' burial enclosures, built, like the crowsteps, when the church was removed, were erected on the old foundations of the church so far as they followed their line; and that, in effect, the Bamff enclosure covers the ancient Roman Catholic chancel, while the ministers' burial place occupies the space of the Protestant Session house. And this assumption, in so far as it affects the width to the South of the arcade, has since been proved true by the discovery of a rough sketch plan of the Balhary pews made a century ago.

The roof of the original church had been very steep, and it remained as before, but it was continued over the new part in a much gentler slope so as to give all possible headroom within. In spite of this, the eaves came so low on the North side, where doubtless the earth may have been higher than the interior floor, that a boy could help another on to the slates. This detail, recalled by one who had been up the roof, is mentioned to add to the other proofs that the new

part was on the North, and not, as is stated in Macgibbon and Ross's monumental work upon Scottish Ecclesiastical Architecture, on the South, where such extensions were usually made. The ivy which formerly covered so much of the masonry concealed the facts from their visiting architect so effectually that one cannot accept any of his conclusions except that the arches belong to about the Reformation period whether before or after. His further deduction that they are pre-Reformation is likely enough, but is now seen to be doubtful, and would remain so even if the press on the North side of the wall had been a piscina, as he supposed. Mr. A. Hutchieson, Broughty Ferry, who is a specialist on the subject, confirms the above from description, and suggests that the man who designed the arches in Alyth was the architect of a similar arcade in Kilconquhar.

The ministers' burial place has been stated to occupy the position of the "Protestant session house," because the position of that chamber is still remembered; but this must not be taken for a denial of the prior existence on that spot of a sacristy communicating with the chancel. Several lines of evidence seem to shew that this sacristy existed from the building of the church in the thirteenth century—as for instance the absence of the broad base which exists in the small remaining piece of the old wall outside, the style of the doorway, the traces left on stones at the west side of the doorway, and right up. Perhaps we may also infer that its floor had originally been higher than that of the

chancel, and that it had been lowered when the North gallery was put in.

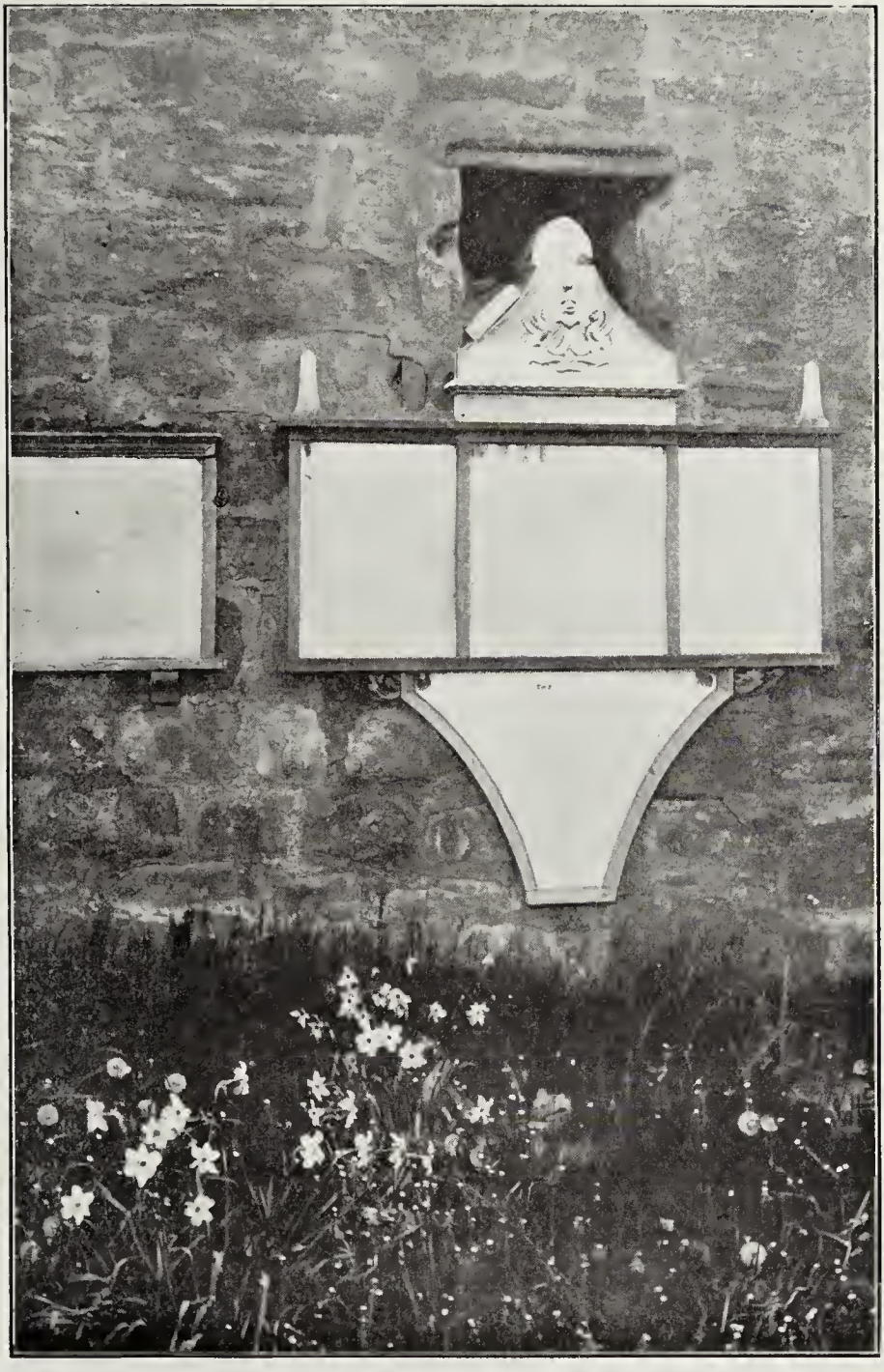
It may be added that the ambry door seems to have been burst open at some time or other, as the socket holes are all broken away. The occasion of that violence must needs be left to the imagination.

Other inferences of later date might well be drawn from traces still remaining. For example, the coat of arms of the Rollos of the Balloch and of Duncrub with date 1629, now to be seen beside the Churchyard gate at the Cross, shews that some considerable building was done in that year. But without dwelling further on the ruins that remain, we must pass on to give some account of the repairs and changes made during the score of years from 1669.

Some of these repairs were of quite minor importance, such as mending "the door crook," or "the band of the queer door," which shows merely that the hinges, as might have been expected, were "crook and band," like those of a gate—the crook being the part that is fixed in the wall or post, as the case may be.

Other repairs owe any local importance they may have to the fact that they furnish the record of a family name not yet forgotten or extinct.

Not unusually the tradesman's assistants are named and paid separately, and very frequently either when work is being done or when a commission is being undertaken, a separate stated sum is paid for "drinkmoney." So far as noted, the sum given,



THE AMBRY.

From Photo. by John B. Maclachlan.

See page 182.

except when "John M'Mullain, skletter" got fourteen shillings, was always either six shillings or twelve shillings, shewing perhaps the influence of sterling coins. The custom continued to exist within the memory of old tradesmen, who say that the liquor was not always but usually bought; and the "foundin' pint," which still drags on a precarious existence, is apparently a relic of it. What the liquor was in the seventeenth century is shewn once by the "item for aill to the hom bringers of the lym," though the man who brought the Communion Cups from Edinburgh in 1686 had his detailed as "uin and aill."

Except on the first occasion after the opening of our Session Book, the pointing of the church is done not by a mason but by a slater. May we not infer that in the latter case the "pointing" was in great part what is known as rough casting or harling, which, strangely enough, is the work of the slater to this day? Too much lime seems required for the mere pointing of grey slates.

But if the slater seems to have done and still seems to do some of the mason's natural work, on the other hand it was the mason who supplied the slater with the very slates which gave him his name—at least where there was not a quarry large enough to have quarrymen special to itself. This may be seen from the Minute of October 19, 1673:—"Given to David fenton, messon, 20 shll for ane 100 sklets qlk he wan west upon the burn of Alyt." It is interesting to know that our local sandstone was ever made use of in this

way, but evidently it was better to go elsewhere for supplies, for the next time there was need (August 2, 1674), the town was "ordained to send 5 horse for sclaits to be brought from aughterhouse on thursday next," and on one or two future occasions "horse" were sent again, though the quarry is not named. Doubtless then, as in the last days of the old grey slates, which are now growing scarcer and scarcer, the best in this neighbourhood came from Balnashanner beside Forfar, the next came from Aucterhouse, and the third from Kinpurnie. This last kind was very coarse but it never went done.

These grey slates were bedded in fog, beaten in neat so as not to be seen, and they were pointed inside with lime; and thus though they hung pivoted on only a skeleton of woodwork they managed to keep out drift and draughts. Thus also, since the slater was a specialist in pointing, we discover the origin of his curious interference with mason's work.

It took three slaters to work grey slates, and the late Alexander Mitchell, my informant, who had himself wrought them, used to tell with glee of a pulpit intimation, remembered by his grandmother because it touched her husband, which takes us back not quite to the date of the Session Book under review but perhaps to as little as fifty or sixty years after. Sandy Mitchell, Sandy Walker, and Lauchie M'Coul had the re-roofing of the Old Church—a thing of not infrequent necessity before the days of heating artificially—and one day Mr. John Robertson, the

minister, whose name is on the glebe boundarystone at West Quarter Farm, finding that the snow was coming in, intimated at the morning service: "Owing to the stress of the weather and the negligence of these tradesmen slaters, there will be no sermon in the afternoon."

Familiar names in this trade, though thus found well back in the eighteenth century do not appear in the seventeenth so far as our Record shews. Indeed, we may possibly infer that Alyth was a better centre for a thatcher at that time than for a slater, and that there was no slater regularly resident; for once when a mason struck out a storm-window, he slated it himself, and though a few small jobs were done by slaters whose residence is not mentioned, yet when there was large work to be done, men had to be brought from a distance. James Allan, in 1686, "came to see" what was needful for pointing the church and got twelve shillings for it, and James Hinneman (17th July, 1681) is stated to be from Dundee, and got "39 shll. in dead arles" for undertaking a considerable repair of the church. A fortnight after "3 horse of kirk cariage" were appointed to be sent from Bardmonie, two to bring slates and "the third to bring the skletters uork-looms from Dundie."

The "work-looms," which could be brought on one packhorse, evidently did not include the full outfit required by the slater, and when we realise the difficulty of moving large and clumsy articles on horseback, we surmise that it must have been the custom of the time

for tradesmen to be provided with some of the necessaries which they now provide for themselves. This is confirmed by accounts paid on the same date for a lime riddle and for "rungs to mend the lydders for the skletters," and corroborated in the same Minute as that which ordered slates to be brought from Auchterhouse by a payment to the beadle "for bringing the long ledder from (for?) crouning, and helping the workmen."

There are a few other instances of "kirk carriage" in the bringing of slates, but it comes much more prominently into notice in the bringing of lime, which was got usually at Dundee. Once (June 14, 1674), the Session "appointed 7 horse to goe to Stjonstown for 7 load of lymston," and according to the Minute of a fortnight later "those that were appointed to bring lym owt of perthe browght the samine"—which incidentally shews how the two names for "The Fair City" were then in the balance.

A "load" of meal is well known to be two bolls, of 140 lbs. each, and no doubt the name was given to that quantity because it was the usual burden brought from the nearest mill on horseback; but one gathers that the quantity of lime brought by each horse from Dundee or Perth (17 and 22 miles away) was only one boll, and so the "load of limestone" mentioned on several occasions was no technical weight but merely the actual burden.

Besides being appointed for slates and lime, two horses of kirk carriage were on one occasion

(June, 1683) "ordained to goe . . . to forfar for the glesin uright" and his tools.

It will be seen that "kirk carriage" was a kind of forced labour. It was strictly on behalf of the Church: when stones were required to build the churchyard dyke they had to be brought by "a voluntar stent." Kirk carriage was imposed by the Session, or by the heritors in conjunction with the Session. Thus on May 22, 1681, "the herctors and session meeting fullie this day frequentlie concerning the repairing and pointing of the churche, they appointed 19 horse to go to dundie for lymston on munday next," an injunction duly obeyed on the following day.

From the foregoing quotation, it will be noticed that the common Scotticism by which in certain circumstances "next" does not mean "the nearest," but is short for some such phrase as "not the nearest but the next thereafter," had apparently not come into use then. Were kirk carriage still in existence, many a Scotsman would send his horses a whole week late if directed to do so on "Monday next." To escape misapprehension, he must have his own idiomatic expression—"Monday first."

Those who were liable to provide kirk carriage were called upon to do so in due rotation—one horse from each "plough." But the "plough," as a close examination of our Session Book shews, was a measure of land rather than the simple instrument of cultivation. Never once is a farm described as "having" one or more ploughs, but several times we

read of them as "being" two ploughs or four ploughs, just as nowadays the size of a farm is often briefly indicated as being "2 pairs" or "4 pairs." Another proof may be deduced from the Minutes of August, 1673, when certain farmers had been appointed to bring lime from John Strivling in Dundee, with the result that "Thomas makie in the moortown for his half plough he hes browght hom a boll of lym from dundie; qras he showld been helped by morentie; qrfor he received 4 shll. from the good [wife] of milnhawgh anent morentie; withe this provision, when the nixt turn of the carriage comethe abowt the goodwife of milnhaugh having morentie should send for suche lik cariage anent the kirk, and that the said Thomas should give in his 4 shll. scots."—One may have the half of a plough of land, but hardly the half of a cultivating instrument.

Putting the kirk carriage for slates, lime, glass, etc., together, as it is recorded through fifteen years, it is possible to make up a list that is complete or almost complete for the parish. Retaining the old spellings (in one of their forms), with the number of horses in figures, the list is as follows:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Bairdmonie, ... ... ... ... | 5 |
| Moortown, ... ... ... ... | $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Morentie, ... ... ... ... | $1\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Pitnacrie, ... ... ... ... | 2 |
| Easter Kirklabank, ... ... ... | 1 |
| Wester Kirklabank and Easter Whytsyd, | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| West Quarter, ... ... ... ... | 2 |
| Balquhym and Burnsyd, ... ... | 1 |
| Redlaikie and Moor, ... ... ... | 2 |
| Alyth, ... ... ... ... ... | 5 |
| The Ballow, ... ... ... ... | 4 |
| Inverquich, ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| Pitcrokny Caldame ... ... ... | 1 |
| Shangie, ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| Brucetun, ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Auchteralight, ... ... ... ... | 2 |
| Bogsyde, Shilwais, and Inshoch, ... | 3 |
| Tillomurdo, ... ... ... ... | 2 |
| The Barony of Bamff, ... ... ... | 13 |
| Blaklunance, ... ... ... ... | 4½ |
| Rannagullon, ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Corb, ... ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Forest, ... ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Kingseat, ... ... ... ... | ½ |
| Ballindoch, ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| Halyeards, ... ... ... ... | 4 |
| Jurdanston, ... ... ... ... | 4 |
| Balharie, ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| Leitvie, ... ... ... ... ... | 8 |
| Boat, ... ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Milland of Bothrie, ... ... ... | 1 |

Once three horses from a place unnamed were sent to Dundee for lime. Occurring, in the rotation, between Bardmony and "The Boat," the three may belong to Bardmony. On the other hand, the Milland

of Bothrie follows, and one would expect more from Aberbothrie than is set down. Certainly tradition recalls that there were "28 oily pigs" long ago at Aberbothrie; that is to say there were twenty-eight independent homes there in the days when people lived on what they grew on their own ground and bought, in addition to necessaries of iron, only their household jar of whale oil.

The question is complicated, however, by the fact that one or more "rooms" or "ploughs" of the lands of Bardmony are now included in the Aberbothries.

It will be noticed that people dwelling in the town of Alyth had five ploughs of land and accordingly sent five horses when required.

From the list it would be possible to gain an approximate idea of the acreage under cultivation in the parish, if a ploughgate equalled 104 acres—but it differed in different localities and periods *—and also of the minimum number of horses used thereon, since in effect every ploughgate needed a plough, and a plough of the clumsy old Scotch type was drawn as a rule by four of the small breed of horses, six being required on stiff or steep land. That census, however, cannot be depended upon, inasmuch as bullocks were sometimes used for the plough instead of horses.

All this kirk carriage, amounting to the labours of about a hundred horses in fourteen years, marks a period of considerable repair of the fabric; and while

* "Now understood to include about 40 Scotch acres at an average."—*Jamieson's Dictionary.*

some of the change was in the interior, and will be mentioned later, there is enough touching the exterior to shew that the process was then active that changed the original plain but chaste sandstone church, with its scarce semi-circular-topped windows, which (to judge by what remains) were ten feet high and two feet wide, into the roughcast and almost barn-like structure, with its numerous right-angled windows in two stories, still remembered by a dwindling few. But, though one could wish beauty to have been consulted in a greater degree, there was patent need of some sort of change; for the introduction of galleries to accommodate the greater congregations of the new time had dimmed the light such as it was, and it could never have been profuse if we are to believe that there were only two narrow windows in the south side of such a long church, and that elsewhere they would be in proportion. The Minute which appears to imply this is that of August 27, 1671, "Given for tuo bolls of lym for to repair and right the tuo sowthe windows of the churche tuo merks."

In spite of the impression conveyed however by the phrase "the tuo sowthe windows of the Churche," we need not infer that there had been at first only two narrow windows in eighty feet of a sidewall, for at a distance of twenty feet from the West end of the church—according to a picture of about a century ago, and the sketch plan of the Balhary pews—there projected into the graveyard as far as seven or eight feet a small aisle six feet wide with sittings at the front

and a stair at the back leading to the "South loft," where ten or a dozen people looked uncomfortably over the minister's left shoulder. This aisle existed in 1671, and "the tuo sowthe windows of the churche" may well have been those existing in the remaining fifty-four feet or thereby of wall to the East of the aisle. But, if so, one would infer that there had been at first not more than three windows in the South side of the church.

Those who may wish to guess what was done in seeking to "repair and right" the two windows in 1671 must keep in view the considerable quantity of lime required; but there is not even that to guide them as to what was done to the church windows in 1674 when, at an estimated cost of a hundred and ninety-eight pounds, the heritors undertook a large "repairing of the roof of the churche, with sydwalls and windows and cowpls thereof." However in August, 1677, two masons were paid four pounds for work which included the striking out of a window in the choir—manifestly in the South wall aforesaid, and most likely between the other two.

Nor was this the end of the process of letting in the light, for two storm windows were made in 1681 by James Dein, wright, doubtless the better to illuminate the North gallery behind the arches; and another was inserted two years later upon an application which incidentally shews that the West end was dark, and that in all probability the West window was solitary and narrow like the rest—

(June 17, 1683), "the minister asked the heretors and session if they thowght fitting of som more uindows to be struken owt for more light and speciallie upon the uest gavell; seing the glesin uright is here; ansueared they thowght it best." The mason-work of this West gable window eost fifty-six shillings.

It was during the previous week that the "glesin uright" had eome "for glessing all the kirk uindows." Within a fortnight he got fifty merks—obviously forehanded payment for work that would not be finished for months. At all events, it is not till November 11 that the final aeeount appears, "given to Patriek uhitson Glesin uright for his uork and glesse—9 lib." At the same time a loeal smith got four pounds for "glesin bands and Iron elesps."

It must not be inferred that this was the first glass ever put in any window of Alyth Parish Chureh. No date can be sèt to that, but on July 21, 1639, as our older reeords in Edinburgh tell us, "Androw Clerk glassen-vright gat 3 libs for ane weir vindow within ane glassin window in ye gewill of quire." Yet it would seem that all the new windows of reeent years were glazed in the summer of 1683. In the previous thirteen years there is mention more than onee of iron "stenehions" being put in this or that window, but never of glass.

We should be more astonished at the eongregation being able to stand the eold had we not rediseovered in reeent years that there is less draught where there

is no glass at all than where there is an opening of only a few inches. But there is such a thing as a through draught, and it would of course be very much increased on a windy day. It is therefore clear that when a window or a storm window was made and the glass omitted for the present, the shutters would be of real importance, whereas to-day they are absent in the humblest churches, and shrivelled into a reminiscence in houses.

The "chocks" made by George Purgavie, smith, at a cost of three pounds, in June, 1682, and "fastened" sometime before the following February, would be outside the main door or at the most public church gate.

Coming now to the interior, we find an equal degree of life and movement. There is probably sufficient indirect evidence to shew that by that time the pulpit stood, as in the last days of the church, against the South wall, close to the "south loft," and facing the middle arch, inasmuch as once or twice the North is called the back of the church. It was so called, for instance, when, in 1671, fourteen shillings were given for "a tree for to help the baksyd of the kirk."

Improvements or at least changes were made upon the pulpit in two separate years. On January 21, 1672, there was "given to Andro sandiman smith for Makeing of Naills to the pulpit, 5 shll. Item to Donald fforrest for a skin to lay abowt the haid of the pulpit halfe ane Mark."

Again in August of the same year nine pounds

three shillings were given for silk "frenzie and the working of it to the pulpet"—another case of the misuse of the letter z.

Thirteen years afterwards (May 17, 1685) a further attempt was made towards beautifying the pulpit, by putting on green cloth got from Edinburgh. The cost of the cloth was five pounds and the bringing of it six shillings. A fortnight later we are told that there was "given to William Dick for small naills to naill the green clothe abowt the pulpit—5 shll 4d. Item to William Balfowr for handling and shewing the clothe abowt the pulpit—14 shill. Item to James orchert for hether and stuffing to the clothe—8 shll." For such an important work they naturally wanted the best of thread, and accordingly, as we are told a week after, there was "given for 25 drop of silk to the green clothe for the pulpit—37 shll 6d. Item to Issobell Fithie for uorking of it 8 shll." It is to be hoped they were all pleased!

To be fittingly mentioned along with the pulpit was the sandglass which at a cost of twelve shillings was bought near the end of June, 1670. A fortnight after it was paid, the same price was given to a local smith "for ane crause to hold the sandglesse." Most likely this "crause" would be fixed to the pulpit or to the "latron" below—well in view of the minister and of everybody else except those who were in an unfortunate place in the North gallery, particularly in its East end, from which the pulpit was invisible, and which, as old people tell us, was nicknamed "the

believers' laft" because those who had sittings there "walked by faith not by sight."

Nothing is told us of what became of "the horologe" which was mended by a mason eleven years before the purchase of the sand-glass.

One substantial article of furniture then possessed which finds no place in modern churches was the Stool of Repentance, which was ordinarily situated as much in sight of the congregation as possible, and at the same time in a spot where delinquents could be conveniently rebuked from the pulpit. We are left wondering whether it was the general introduction of pews or the choice of a more prominent spot which accounts for the payment of five shillings and fourpence on December 18, 1670, "to andro Sandiman smithe and to John Smithe the meassons servant for transporting the stool of repentance"; and we look in vain for further light upon the question to the Minute of July 9 in the following year wherein there is an account from the mason himself, part of which was "for faistening the stooll of repentance in the west end of the kirk hard to the piller qr it presentlie stands." But after much trouble and search, the discovery was made in our Edinburgh book of Minutes that on August 9, 1663, the stool was "newlie set up upon the south side of the north west pillar directlie above that dask sometime belonging to Patrik Rattray and now belonging to Mr Thomas Irland, his son-in-law." From this exalted position, where signs of it are still to be seen, it was removed at the

close of 1670; and the Presbytery Register states that in rearranging the pews in the church, as will be afterwards explained, the Presbytery found it necessary to "appoint and ordaine that the seat for public repentance be removed from the north west pillar wher it now stands and be affixed to the south west pillar at the entrance at the south door, as also that the loft westward of the pulpit be removed baekward equal with the pillars," manifestly that there might be nothing between the pulpit and the stool. From the time of its "transporting" it stood immediately to the West of the small South aisle, while the pulpit was immediately to the East of it.

The gallery in this aisle, and at first projecting out of it, had been petitioned for in 1654, but though the Session fixed a penalty to be paid by the petitioners if they had not got it erected before August, 1655, the seats were apportioned only in 1663. The order to have the front seat removed was not obeyed without trouble, for on December 18, 1670, "The session ordains those that sits in the loft having propertie therto to remove bak the loft befor the first day of Janr. nixt according to the act of the Prisbyterie." Next week "those to whom the loft belongs sowght 8 dayes advysing for removing of it back." At the end of that time John Neving is the only one who "is content and consents," and the others are "eited to compeir befor the session." "Non of them compeiring, the minister is to report the samine to the prisbyterie nixt." Happily in the middle of June

it is announced that "the prisbyterie's ordinance anent the removing and putting bak of the loft is obeied and done."

In these Minutes this little South gallery is styled "the loft." Are we to conclude that as yet there was no other, or are we to conclude that "the loft" means "the loft in question"? Tradition tells of four galleries being in the church, a North gallery stretching from end to end behind and under the arches, an East and a West gallery in front of the arches, and the small South gallery. Did the North gallery not exist in 1670? There was not much head room for it certainly, and it must have been fairly flat, but one would think that the gallery facing the pulpit would be the first to be set up, and that every new storm window was new evidence, and so its existence, perhaps from 1629, has been assumed. But unless the North gallery was the oldest, there would seem to have been none other than the South gallery till 1676, when we have quite a full and interesting account of the making of the East gallery over the ancient chancel.

April 30, 1676.—"This Day the minister considering the numerousnes of our congregation and the inconveniencie diverse were put too by reason of our dayly throngues and compleaning for want of seats did propose ane overture anent building ane loft in the east end of kirk the session did approve the motion, but it was thought fit that the heritors should be acquainted with it and for that end the minister is

to be remembred the next lords day to desire the heritors and all concerned to wait on the session."

The joint meeting was held accordingly, and "with ane unanimous vote they al accorded that the work wold be much for the publik good." Of the two plans discussed, viz., that the gallery should be built by those who wanted seats, or that the minister and session should use the poor's money for the purpose, the second was adopted; and all "thought that we might make more advantage that way for the poors use then lening out there money in evil hands." With the same unanimity the workman chosen was David Donaldson in Cotyards, a place perhaps 300 yards from Blacklaw farm, in the direction of Alyth, which twenty years ago was still marked by a fine old tree.

The bargain was struck at once, David Donaldson requiring "eight score of merks for the building of the loft in the queer, fourscore to be payed against 24 of june and the other fourscore at the closing of the work."

A good deal of lime was got immediately thereafter for necessary mason work, but nothing is said about the gallery till the end of January following, when "the wright david donaldson by name . . . having given in his regrait of the great losse that he will be at about the building and erecting the loft in the queer, giving in his whole expences and charges in writ this day that he hes debursed threescore eleven lib. 1 shll scots for trees and deals and hes been 74 days wholy with his son," the Session assessing the wage of the two

as a pound per day decided to give twenty pounds more than the agreement. In other words, they gave rather over half the computed loss, and perhaps a slight indication of the natural friction may be seen in the cold touch of description "David Donaldson by name," but, if so, it was not sufficient to prevent either father or son from being employed afterwards.

Since the wright got 190 merks for the gallery, and since it is stated on April 22, 1677, that "the said loft with the stairr" had required in all 240 merks of the poor's money, it would seem that the fifty merks of difference had been spent on mason work and mason's materials, and therefore that the stair was of stone. This is in keeping with tradition and with living memory, which recalls an outside stair on the gable similar to the stair at the other end which gave access to the West loft, and one who in his boyhood sat in the Macritch pew in the Western gallery recalls that the two lofts were similar in every respect.

From the Minute one can fairly well deduce the plan upon which the East gallery was constructed. Up against the old wall, in line with the arches (possibly rising by low steps), were four long pews, and facing them four similar pews with their backs towards the South wall of the church. Betwixt these were two tiers of five pews each facing the West and separated by a passage.

The eighteen pews, or "dasks" as they were named then, were valued according to their size and situation from eight to eleven pounds each, and the total

valuation according to the scheme adopted exceeded the cost by three merks. The Session did not deal with solitary seatholders—the whole pew was let, and it was decided that those who took a pew should pay two shillings Scots for every pound at which the pew was valued, a preference being promised to "whatever heritor wedsetter or fewer shall give in for any dask." Seeing that these persons had not been at the expense of forming this gallery, this preference seems as unfair as it was undemocratic, but though the favouritism of the age was different from ours, yet it must be admitted that in a period of such general poverty it was financially wise to let to those who were surest to pay. It must also be remembered that the number of country lairds was much greater then than now, and so the preference was in that respect wider.

The names of the first pewholders are given, and the bargain promised to be quite good for the poor's fund so long as the loft was fully let, seeing the yield would be $10\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. on the outlay. And certainly at first every pew was taken, which is sufficiently remarkable when the rest of the church was free to all.

Improvements suggested themselves in due time, and next summer over five pounds were given for "deals to the choir loft," which would seem to have been put to their use in December when John Donaldson got about two day's pay for "helping" it—there being given for the "nails thereto—4 shll 6d." Possibly because the mason got the same sum "for cutting holes in the quier wall" his charge has been omitted by

oversight, but if this repair had anything to do with a front to the gallery, some of the holes are perhaps still visible.

Towards the end of the following year (October 19, 1679) a new idea emerges. At that date an offer was made by "John Smithe fewer in the east side of litfie" to purchase "the for-seat of the sowthside of the quier loft" at its declared value, "and after due and mature thowghts it was unanimowslie accorded on that it was more fit and easful for the session to make seal then to sett the seat," and on the delivery of ten pounds to the boxmaster, "the minister with unanimowse consent of the session sold assigned and disponed . . . to and in favowrs of the said John Smithe his airs and assignays qtsumever heretablie and irredimablie the forsaid foredask . . . . with powr to him and his forsaids to bruik, possesse and enjoy the same."

At that time there was a John Smithe in West Leitfie as well as the one in East Leitfie. From one or other were descended the Smythes of Balhary, whose name still survives though the male line is extinct.

By the end of the year we discover that John Smithe's purchase was for the purpose of securing a transfer to William Moncriefe dyer in Alyth, who had at the beginning leased one of the shorter pews, but who had not the preference that was extended to a heritor, wadsetter, or feuar. The Minute recording the transfer, like the Minute recording the purchase, is long, and is in absolutely legal terms. It is signed

by "J. Smith" and his witnesses, and was drawn up by James Ramsay, notary public.

In the following years there is record of the payment of the pew rents, and for a while the only thing to be noted is that the relative minute gets gradually later and later. On September 19, 1686, however, the statement is made that "the monie payable for those that sits in the east Loft was given in to the session be James Cargill except 2 lib 4 sh. and that for the year 85."

We learn very little more about this gallery except that it had done its share, as might have been expected, in forcing new windows upon the church. This seems to be implied in a small account of date 1686, "for mending the east Loft windou uith 6 iron bolts." But surely it is not often that we learn so much about the making and early history of any ancient church gallery as we have done about this one.

And yet after all galleries are not, in their present use and form, so very ancient, for they date only from about the time of the Reformation, when the greatly increased congregations necessitated more space being found. But comparatively modern as this makes them out to be, galleries soon acquired a church tone, and it is sometimes difficult to account for their existence in buildings not much over a century old unless they were preferred for that reason. Such may have been the motive, rather than necessity or economy, for building one in the little Meeting House in Losset Road, popularly known in tradition as the "Duncans'

Kirkie"—a building which is now a stable of no more than two ordinary stalls. In the old Parish Church, however, the surrounding immemorial graves made almost impossible any other enlargement of the church.

We have seen that in the choir loft there were pews from the first, and by most of us the pews are vaguely supposed to have been from the beginning, but as a matter of fact we have in our Session Books permission given for the first erection of many of them, and it was not till 1670 that the area seems to have been fully supplied with them. On August 14 of that year, a petition was presented by the more remote heritors, from Tullymurdoch, five miles distant, away to the back of Blacklunans at the top of the parish, "concerning rooms in the churche for putting up dasks," and a general meeting of heritors and some of the elders was appointed for "frydday nixt." On which day David Kinloch of Aberbothrie "being a prime heretor of the parish appeared personallie requyring also that he might have place to put a seat in." Hitherto when at any time permission had been asked for the erection of a "dask," now here now there, the Session had dealt with the matter, but this was too much for them, and the whole business was referred to the Presbytery of Meigle and the Bishop of Dunkeld. At the Session's request, the Presbytery appointed "several ministers commissionated from them to meet on thursday," the 22nd of September, but as "they could not get things setled anent the

dasks foirsd . . . they have continued the mater unto the 3rd tuysday of october." On the first Sunday after that date it is related that "the ministers of the prisbyterie did meet . . . eoncerning the dasks of the churche and the minister's manse, and what was done is notified and extant in their registar." *

The Presbytery Register shews that at first the heritors thought the Presbytery "needed not to trouble themselves with planting dasks in the kirk because they judged that work properlie belonged to themselves and that they were hopefull to give all parties satisfaction," but later in the day the heritors in despair "intreated humblie that the Presbyterie would be pleased to take the work off their hands," engaging themselves to accept the decision whatever it might be. The Presbytery accordingly gave orders to shift the stool of repentance, as already stated, and also some isolated pews including the schoolmaster's, so as to apportion room for pews to the petitioners from Blacklunans and Aberbothrie. And though they had asked whether any others had anything to desire or represent thereanent, it would seem that none came forward for pews except the petitioners themselves. Rather than be at the expense, some would still content themselves with creepie stools or chance forms, though imperfect glazing and lack of heating must have made pews much more desirable than they are to-day; but it looks as though we might presume that pews were thenceforth

* As to the Manse, see Appendix.

pretty general, since there are no more recorded applications for leave to set them up. It is true that between August 3 and Oetober 12, 1673, three fir trees were bought at a cost of thirty-six shillings "to mak seatts to the elders and deacons to sitt on," but whether these were for use during the serviees or during the giving out of alms does not appear, and it will be noticed that they are not called "dasks." However, the explanation may be that the elders and deacons had long had an enclosed space to whieh eaeh man might bring his creepie stool if he liked, and now permanent seats were being put in. It is not inconsistent with this idea that the elders' pew in the nineteenth century was a "faud" in front of the first piller from the East.

There are some notices about the transfer of pew rights whieh may be given here. The first is dated May 23, 1675:—"This day David Donald in shangie produeed an varrand from the earle of airly, ordaining him to sit in the southend of my Lord his dask upon the ehanceller wal adjacent to john ogilvys in burnsyde vherewith the minister and session was content and ordained his right to the said dask to be insert in the session book." A eopy of the warrant follows, in whieh the pew is deseribed as a "litle dask" between John Ogilvy's and "the south entrie of the ehaneeller wall" and that the applieant is to sit there "during our pleasure allennarly as witnes our hand at corteehie the 15 day of may 1675." The door, of whose existenee we thus casually learn, would be at what is

now the South-west corner of the Bamff burial ground, and the pew would occupy part of the front edge of the ancient chancel.

David Donald's success appears to have stirred up a neighbour to seek the permanent use of a pew also, and three weeks later another, but less formal warrant was produced from Lord Airlie by James Ramsay from Inverqueich:—"Being informed that ther is an dask of mine in the church of alight called the green dask which is turned ruinous I doe therefor hereby give libertie to James Ramsay my tennent to repair the samine dask and sit in it during my pleasur allennerly which is al at present from your assured frind."

Probably the only other case of similar transference of pew rights is that of October 12, 1684:—"This day david steill in Leitvie gave in a peper to the session; shawing his agreement uith Barbara Blair relict to Patrik duncan in bairdmonie, and uith her son for the half of the dask uherinto she and her son had a right throw the said Patrick; uhilk stands befor the pulpit, and this agreement foirsaid concerning the timber of the said dask he desired to be insert in the session book ad futuram rei memoriam." By so doing, he justifies our inference about the position of the pulpit in his day, for the Bardmony seats in the last years of the church were a few feet to the left of it.

Inasmuch as they would likely be used as pews at the ordinary services, an account falls to be made at this

point of the introduction of Communion Tables—in itself the climax of the whole movement for permanent church furnishings. At the dispensing of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there was of necessity a table or tables in use, but at first they were removed after the Communion day. Such at least is our inference from the statement on August 30, 1685—the last year of Mr. Thomas Robertson's ministry—"Given to James Dein wright for making the communion tabls—14 lib. Item given for timber for the said boords 6 lib. 7 shll. whilk with 9 lib. befor maks 15 lib. 7 shll. Item given to John Crighton James Dein his servant in drinkmoney—12 shll."

It would seem that only two tables were made—though doubtless of considerable length—for on June 17, 1686, when an inventory was taken by desire of the new minister, there were "tuo linning Cloths for the Communion tables."

The seats for the elders, wherever they were to be placed, were evidently not to be put in the session house, for only six years afterwards a very complete furnishing of it was required, and as the process is a good sample of the manner in which such things had to be gone about at that time, the story may be told in full extracts:—

July 27, 1679.—"Ther was 7 lib. 6 shll. seots [taken out of the box] and given for tries and deals to mak seats in the session howse. Item given for riving asunder the dails and laying them up 4 shll."

August 10.—"James miller deacon reports that ther was 12 deals and fowr tries which was formerly coft for the foirsaid use."

November 23.—"Given to Alexr. Gorthie wright in drinkmoney for making seats in the cownsel-howse 4 shll."

December 7.—"Given to Alexr. Gorthie wright for making seats in the session howse 6 lib. 13 shll. 4d, item for naills therto 15 shll. item to David Smithe for helping to sawe the dales therto 12 shll."

In the same year (June 8) there was paid "to Alexr. Gortie for making ane lidde to ane bowle of his own timber 16 shll," and (December 7) "to Abraham Low for making a lock to the bowle in the session house 40 shll." A bole is now best known as a narrow aperture in a barn wall for ventilation and for light, but in these accounts it evidently means a small doorless press in a wall, like that which in Burns was "beyont the ingle lowe." The one which still exists cannot be the bole in question, for there are no signs of a lock hole.

Though forbidden by the General Assemblies of 1576, 1588, and 1643, the insanitary and gruesome custom of burying beneath the clay floor of the church was still maintained, but those who sought it for their friends had to pay sweetly for their sentiment or their superstition. The fee required is nowhere mentioned in the volume under review, but in the year 1624 it was ten merks—the first payment put in the poor's box being by "James Rettray of Renaguilyinn." With

a wide knowledge of the general poverty and an astute knowledge of human nature, the Session insisted from the beginning on the delivery of a guarantee for payment, one such in 1636 from Mains of Crewchie being "ane siluer belt haid in pledge of hir law siluer." Evidently some slackness had crept in as the years passed by, for on May 15, 1670, "the session hes ordained that that act concerning bureing in the churche be renewed. That is to say the Kirk officer shall not break yeard in the churche nor suffer it to be broken for bureing of any untill they lay down a pledg or give a band for paying for the samin according to order; and that the schoolmaster get his due." In 1676 (November 12) and again in 1683 (January 14), there were complaints about neglect of payment alike for burials within and without the church, and it was decreed on both occasions to the effect "that David Smith, kirk officer, shall not brak earthe befor the schoolmaster shall be payed otheruais to pay it himself."

Mention has already been made of the small South aisle not far from the Western door with its pillars to East and West, and, as in connection with the old Parish Church, there was a chapel dedicated to St. Ninian, one would naturally suppose this South aisle to have been originally the site of that chapel. But the deed of cognition and infeftment in 1670 of Mr. Thomas Robertson in the chaplainry and altarage of St. Ninian states that it stood "on the North side of the Kirkyard." This description does not wholly

exclude the South aisle, for it had a door to the graveyard—perhaps a few steps above the ground—and anciently that might have been looked upon as the North side of the graveyard, since there were no graves in the narrow strip of grass to the North of the church; but the Rev. William Ramsay in the *New Statistical Account* of Alyth, from which the terms of this deed are quoted, removes our last lingering hope by adding that the site was still pointed out. If the South aisle had been in his mind, he could not have failed to say so.

The church itself was dedicated, not to St. Ninian, but to St. Moluag, whose name is remembered in local tradition only in connection with an annual fair held long ago at the Woolmarket after sheep clipping—in fact on June 25—and called "Simmalogue's Fair." Moluag, who died in 592, a few years before St. Columba, was Abbot of Lismore. He was a descendant of the King of Munster, and originally his name was Leu or Lua. The syllables put to the beginning and end were common in the Celtic Church, and expressed honour and endearment, which, however, might usually be more or less conventional, and which might therefore be fairly translated as "The Very Reverend." But the expression of endearment would seem to have been literally deserved in his case, for we read of "a wee bird wailing because Molua was dead. Never a living thing, whether small or great, did he kill; hence it is that all the creatures lament him." Moluag is thought

to have been the first of the great Celtic missionaries to make a policy of planting schools along with churches, and his efforts seem to have been very successful, if one may judge by the large number of churches dedicated to him. It is possible that beneath the thirteenth century chancel wall of our ruined church, or beneath the sixteenth century arches there may be traces of a church dating from his time, difficult perhaps to recognise if it was built of wattle wood and clay, but very precious whether it was himself, or his admirers afterwards, who caused it to be made. More certainly one would find traces of the simple stone church which preceded that whose ruins we still possess and into whose history we have been dipping.

# THE BELL.

If one were to judge by modern Kirk Session Minutes, one would expect little or no reference to the bell, but ancient Minutes differ from modern ones in many respects, and in the brief nineteen years of our old volume, the bell is very frequently mentioned.

Almost the first notice of it is in an "Act" of Session passed on June 12th, 1670. "Concerning the ringing of the bell, it is enacted and ordained that the bell be not rung at evrie mans pleasur; but only by the kirk officer or any other in his place having their warrand and direction from the ministers or the Bylzie and give any shall be found to ring the bell against the ministers or bylzies will and without any direction from them they shall pay fourtie shll Scots toties quoties."

Next year there was need of further legislation.

March 26, 1671.—"This day the session considering the failing of the place qron the bell hings to be sore worn and weak, hes ordained that it be knelled onlie qn they goe to burials, and not to be doubled at all neither qn they go furthe to burialls, neither qn the corps approches to the grave as they were wont formerlie."

"William anderson having rung the bell this week at the bureing of his brother against the ministers

will dowbling it and for the braking of the bell tow The session hes ordained him to pay 30 shll to buy a new tow to the bell."

April 2, 1671.—"this day the minister published owt of pulpit that the bell shall not be dowbled at burialls, but knelled onlie, and that the first and second bell to the preatching to be knelled and the 3d onlie dowbled."

The frail condition of the belfry, etc., required active measures later in the year, of which the Minutes give a lively idea:—

August 27, 1671.—"Given to Abraham low Smythe 6 shll 8d in drinkmoney for sighting of the bell whiche is for to be helped."

October 1, 1671.—"Ther was given to David fenton eight shll scots for to goe to Abraham low Smithe in cowpergrange who had received the bell tongue to be helped and righted be him, and to desire him to heasten the mending of it, that the bell being speedilie mended may be hung up again."

October 22.—"Given to Abraham low smithe in cowpergrange for the righting of the bell 22 lib." (£22 Scots).

October 29.—"Given for led to the bell 4 shll." "Given to David fenton for helping up with the bell again and his service therewith 42 shll"

One curious item of expense, viz., soap for the bell, cannot possibly escape notice since it occurs almost a hundred times. The Session Clerk had a preference for the Scots pronunciation, and with two exceptions

when he put down "sope" he always wrote "seap." Others more Anglified wrote "soap" for a period of three years in the middle of the book, and for the final two years a new writer put down "sop."

"Seap" was pronounced "sayp," just as Cowper meant "sea" to be pronounced like "say" in a well known hymn:—

> "God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform;
> He plants His footsteps in the sea,
> And rides upon the storm."

Incidentally, this reminds us that the older pronunciation in a number of our words is retained only by the Irish.

Nothing is said about the quantities of soap consumed, but the cost was generally eighteen pence, though occasionally sixteen, or twenty-four, or even thirty-two pence, when evidently a double quantity was laid in; and once (October, 1671) the greedy bell consumed thirty-two pence worth of butter.

There was no certain interval between the supplies; oftenest not more than a month passed, almost as frequently two months passed, very occasionally three or four or five months passed, and it is a surprise when once well nigh eleven months passed, but the secret is out at the end of them when, on 31st May, 1674, the price of a new supply is followed by "Item to alexr. smithe for mending of the bell chain 14 shil." It looks as though the bell had got a rest for a

while! Another temporary reduetion took plaee after January 25th, 1685, when "David Meneur . . . . . uas ehosen and admitted to be kirk offieer in the rowm and place of David Smith uho deeesed the last week," but just when a reader is beginning to wonder whether there had formerly been waste on the part of the beadle rather than greed on the part of the bell, the old charge is renewed, though on a slightly redueed seale.

It is at first sight diffieult to aeeount for this great quantity of lubrieants, for nothing of the kind is required now, and aged people tell that the bell rope came down inside the roof of the old ehureh as it does in the present building; but I have been informed by Mr. Alexander Mitehell, who had seen it both from below and from above (!) that originally it had been outside, for there was a large rut worn in the West gable and also deep in the stone moulding over the West door. Beneath that wide moulding, and sheltered also by the broad semi-cireular projeeting sides of the door-way the bell-ringer had evidently taken eover in wet weather, even if it were possible to peal the bell successfully at an angle elear of the wall. Hence it was desirable to anoint the rope with blaek soap to save friction, and, as rain would wash it away quiekly, we have here the real reason for the experiment with butter. We have here also an indirect reeord of the weather of that far-off time, for the quieker a quantity of soap went done, the more rain there must have been. Judging by this rule, 1678 must have been a very

wet year, for from March to December new supplies were needed monthly, while in July two were got; and the rule is put to a fair test by the serious drought of 1681, for which a general fast was held throughout the kingdom on June 29th, for in five months from the beginning of April no more soap was required.

Naturally the friction which, despite the plentiful use of slippery soap, cut ruts in the hard stone, wore away the rope, and usually every second year there was an account for "bell towes" or their mending. The lowest charge was "for tuo foldam of tows to the bell 4 shll 6d," and at other times the cost was from 9 to 16 shll, except in September, 1671, when, being flush of money from the fine already mentioned, the Session spent twenty-five shillings on "15 faddom of towes to the bell." That new rope lasted, without recorded splicing or addition, for over six years.

The bell chain required mending too, as we might expect, and as we have seen already, but only about half as often, and perhaps the one thing worth notice in that connection is the diminutive "chyngie" (1670) or "chainzie" (1678), which shews that the chain was but short. These words would be pronounced alike, or nearly so, and the second shews that mistaken use of the letter "z," which has been referred to elsewhere.

The repeated repairs required in rope and chain, the continual expense of soft soap, the loosening of the supports once and again, and the damage to the wall of the church must at length in themselves have forced the change of the rope from outside to the inside,

though there is maybe truth also in the quaint explanation that "the laddies was ower wild that time to haud from ringin' the bell." But whatever may have been the other improvements, the change did not altogether prevent daring boys from this ploy, for they got on the roof at the North side where it was low, and climbed up to the "bell house" on the West gable, some forty or fifty feet from the ground, and alarmed the neighbourhood.

Probably the only other repairs as yet unnoted in this chronicle were "a thong to the tongue of the bell 14 shll" (1684), and "to James orchard for mending the thong of the bell 4 sh" (1687), and these shew part of the mechanism.

"The Kirk officer his ordinar 4 lib" is an item which appears annually, but, while he was paid separately for some other work, such as grave-digging, his modest salary of £4 Scots covered more than bell-ringing. His absence on two or three occasions on other Church business shews us that sixteen pence or two shillings Scots were thought to be suitable payments "for ringing of the bell" for a Sunday.

What became of this old bell at last does not seem to be certainly known. But its loss suggests the regret that such a fine steeple as we have now got has not yet been furnished by some generous donor with a peal of bells which would be a joy to the whole community.

## THE HAND BELL.

The subject would not be complete without reference to the hand bell. The whole story, so far as it is found in this book of records, can be told in quotation:—

September 24, 1682.—"Given to James mencur merchant for ane hand bell browght owt of holland, uithe the exchanging of the old bell and for ane ŭeather cock browght therfrae 14 lib. 12 shll."

March 29, 1685.—"Ther uas tuo rex dollors taken owt of the box and given to Wm. Mathow merchant, to exchange the hand bell at Egr" (Edinburgh).

April 5, 1685.—"William Mathow merchant and deacon of session returning from Egr browght the changed hand bell uith him, and declared he gave eight lib. for the changing of it, so that therby he said he debursed 44 shll. Scots of his own money qlk uas repayed."

October 4, 1685.—"Item for putting a hand to the handbell—14 shll."

Though nothing is here said of the particular use of the hand bell, it would be for funerals in Alyth as elsewhere at that time. In some places it was called "the deid bell," in others "the corpse bell," or "the lych bell," or "the funeral bell," and in Macgeorge's

*Old Glasgow* an account, written in 1661, of its use there is quoted:—"Their manner of burial is when one dies the sexton or bellman goeth about the streets with a small bell, which he tinkleth all along as he goeth, and now and then he makes a stand and proclaims who is dead and invites the people to come to the funeral at such an hour." It was usual also for the sexton to accompany funerals: at Galston, in 1762, he was allowed to charge twopence per mile for ringing the small bell, and, latterly at least, he walked in front and rang the bell when there was to be a change of bearers. This custom of accompanying funerals with the hand bell was in existence before the Reformation, and Chaucer in "The Pardoner's Tale," speaks of three roysterers who

> "Were set them in a tavern for to drink
> And as they sat they heard a bellë clink
> Before a corpse [that] was carried to the grave."

But how far back the custom goes is unknown, nor does it in itself account for the extraordinary reverence in which these hand bells were held in the Celtic Church prior to the days of Roman Catholicism, and long prior, therefore, to the twelfth century, when the "sacring bell" at the elevation of the host was introduced. Whether their first use was for calling the brethren of the primitive monasteries to prayer, or the people to worship (since steeple bells were unknown), or to drive away evil spirits, or what else, the reverence that hallowed them is indicated by legends which involved

them in supernatural occurrences and attributed to them miraculous powers, by the habit of taking oaths on the bell as a more sacred thing than on the gospels, and by the grand ornamental shrines which in course of time were made for them. One of these beautifully enshrined bells is that of Kilmichael Glassary in Argyllshire, and there is ground for the belief that the bell thus honoured was made for Moluag of Lismore, the contemporary of Columba, and the patron saint of Alyth Parish Church.

The use of the hand bell attracted the attention of the heathen as well as the faithful: according to the *Clarendon Press Icelandic Dictionary,* Bjöllu gaetir, "the keeper of the bell," was a nickname given by the heathen Icelanders to a missionary about A.D. 998.

The most ancient hand bells were of thin beaten iron, four cornered, rivetted down the side, and sometimes dipped in bronze, and if the one belonging to Alyth was of that material, it is not to be wondered at that the men of 1682 should have wanted a fine new one from Holland, but what would we not give for the old one! It is greatly to be regretted that there is no trace left of even "the changed hand-bell" of 1685, nor do any traditions seem to remain of its use.

# THE CHURCHYARD.

LYING peacefully round the remains of the old Parish Church, the ancient graveyard of Alyth sleeps its last sleep. No longer does it gather into its bosom the frail and the spent and the weary, no longer is its breast bedewed with sorrow's tears. But what a hoary age had it reached ere the last funeral entered its gates! Its long term of melancholy usefulness began immemorial generations gone when the first Christians of the district were able to claim for themselves a place of worship and "took possession of the land with a grave," but the unnumbered thousands who were buried there are without record down to 1624, after which a list kept by the Session Clerk, with more care and with more regularity than common, has survived all hazards. In 1683, however, it needed improvement in the opinion of the Synod, and, by implication, in the opinion of the Session also, for on 29th April the minister "did intimat the synods order for setting down those that are dead and buried in the church yeard of Alyt, to the effect a list of ther names may be had when they are requyred; and therefor the beddell is ordained to give up a roll of those uhom he buries, once in the ueek to the clerk, that therby no defunct may be omitted."

When our volume opens, David Smith was gravedigger and beadle. He was "not ueill" and got four shillings from the poor's box on January 11, 1685. Next week he and his son James "sick persons" got fourteen shillings, and on January 25 "David Mencur this day uas chosen and admitted to be kirk officer in the rowm and place of David Smith uho decesed the last week; and his admission uas with consent of minister heretors, elders and deacons of session, unanimuslay, uho promised to be faithfull in dischargeing of his office." In the early part of 1688 David Mencur was succeeded by Andrew Barron, who was still in office ten years later.

The gravedigger's ordinary fee is not mentioned, but for burying a pauper the usual, though not the invariable sum given him was four shillings; and since he got no more for "bureing tuo of the poor" on November 3, 1672, it is plain he was not expected to trouble about opening two graves for such as they. But whatever was his fee, his duty required him to collect more than his own, and on November 12, 1676, "The clark compleaning that the payment of burials was not weel payed him be the kirk oficer it was ordainet that the kirk oficer should not break earth until payment be mad or pledgs laid anent out burials or those within the kirk otherways to pay it himself according to the former practise." Like some other of the Session's "acts," this required to be repeated —which was done on January 14, 1683.

As might be expected, the graveyard had a certain

history of its own apart from the story of its officers and of its dead. Thus on March 27, 1670, an "act" appears in the Minute Book which gives us a glimpse of it: "It is enacted and ordained that no horse nor best shall be sufferd to com within the churche yeird and that it shall be proclamed at the crosse on tuysday nixt that evrie chepmans horse or any other mans that shall be seen within the churche yeard herafter shall be layable in payment of 6 shll 8d toties quoties."

Very likely this order would be obeyed for a time, but though the Session wielded wonderful power at that period, their act fell by and by into disuse, and old custom reasserted itself as is shewn by what the Clerk had to write on September 2, 1683. "The session considering the abusing of the churche yeard by horses and beasts daylie passing throwgh it; they have concluded to have dyks bigged and fortified uhen the hervest is ended and the passages and entries made so firm that horses and other beasts may be holdin owt off it." A month later practical steps were taken:—"This day the session anent the churche yeard dyks, have unanimowslie condischended upon a voluntar stent upon the plows of the paroche, wiz: that evrie plewgh bring six load of stons for the churche yeard dyks."

Alyth people of to-day, while readily imagining that small traders and others might find the grass of the graveyard quite a treasure when weekly markets were held close by, may yet be unable to see how it would be a convenience to anybody to take their horses

daily through it. But it must be remembered that the present great retaining wall facing the Alyth Burn on the South was built with the stones of the church when it was taken down not much over seventy years ago, and that previously the churchyard came with a sharp slope to the gardens below. From the church down this slope an alley called the "Priestgate," now partly behind the Episcopal School and partly built upon by it, but still open in the disused "Priesties' Wynd," below Chapel Street, led across the Burn, where there were stepping stones, and thence up the "Priestgate Heads" (corrupted into "Persecute Heads"), where now stands Airlie Mount, etc., to Muirend—and after keeping to the Muirton Road for a short distance it struck through the field called the "Gallows Knowe" and thence past "Burndales"—now called Greymount—to whose well it was a custom to carry the Alyth infants for their first washing, to make them strong all their life. Thence crossing the burn, it passed Nether Muirton (Burnside), and so onwards. When one remembers that the main public roads of to-day did not then exist, it will readily be realised that this path served a considerable district; and, as in unfenced land, pack-horses could mostly go where a man could go, it would sometimes be made a short-cut for them even in the country portion. Our Minutes supply evidence that at anyrate the steeply sloping path to the church in which it ended was made a short-cut for pack-horses going to the Woolmarket or from it.

Here it may be interpolated that ever since the publication of the *New Statistical Account of Scotland* at least, the commonest derivation for the name of Alyth has locally been "Gaelic aileadh, a slope"; and the sharp slope of the graveyard from the church towards the burn would account for such a name much more readily than any other slope whatever, since the town might quite well be the child of the church. Unfortunately, even if the sound of aileadh by itself could develop into Alyth, no available Gaelic dictionary gives any such appropriate meaning to the word, nor do Gaelic scholars who have been consulted know it in that sense; so the burden of the evidence is surely against the favourite derivation.

The dykes built at the end of 1683 would be more effectual than "acts" in getting rid of horses and cattle, and they would help to get rid of another nuisance previously complained of in August of the same year: "The session considering the abusing of the churche yeard by bigging ther petts and turfs in it; hes ordered that peats and turfs shall be removed owt of the churche yeard uithin 14 dayes except the owners of them seek ane tolleration and gett it from minister and session and the minister is to publish this ordinance the next Sabth. from pulpit at the session desire."

It is to be feared that the Session itself was not altogether free from blame in this matter, for, as if it were not enough to have left some parts so long unprotected, it had permitted liberties ten years

earlier even where there was already a dyke. On April 20, 1673, "John Eduard building ane howse at the bak of the churche, closse to the churche yeard dyk; this day compeired befor the session and gave in a supplication to them craving libertie of a tollerance from them to have a doore upon the sowthe syd of his howse opening towards the kirkyeard. The session taking the mater to their consideration and fearing that it may doe ill or give evill exemple to others grants him his desire with this cawtion that if it shall be fownd prejudiciall any wayes after it is set furth, ereeted in the new bigged howse; In that caise the said John obledges himself befor the session to close and big up the said doore qn he shall be desired be minister or session or be any emitted be vertue of ane ordinance from them under the penaltie of [not stated]." Can we doubt that John Edward was one of those who were hard up for space to store the winter's peats and heat-economising turf?

The Kirk Session would appear to have had a commendable wish to beautify the graveyard, for on March 29, 1674, they gave Thomas Watson and David Smithe sixteen shillings for transporting thither and planting eighteen young trees; but possibly they were keen rather for future profit when they would have them to sell. They certainly sold trees of some sort before "Apryll" 22, 1688, on which date "James Miller gave in 14sh as an arles pennie given by James Dean uright for the trees in the south end of the church yeard sold to him for tuentie eight pounds scotts."

It is well known that when there were no local newspapers the churchyard before service in all country parishes was a favourite meeting place of friends and neighbours, and possibly the love of some for the Courts of the Lord was made more ardent by the hope of news; but this couthie custom was not enough to satisfy everybody in Alyth about 1674, for on July 12 of that year appears this Minute—"because that the minister and session knouing that there ar several persons that remains in churchyard in tim of Divin service the session thowght fitting that the minister vold give them a publik admonition from pulpit the next Sabt that they vold not stay in the churchyard in time of Divin service." And just exactly two years after, part of an intimation from the pulpit was "that none stay nor be in the church-yeard in tim of sermon."

There were acute differences of taste in headstones then as now, as is brought out in 1672 by the renewal of a former "act" thereanent afterwards quoted almost verbatim in the Minute of July 28, 1678: "This day the minister reports that he is extreamly trowbled anent debetable burial stons in the Church zeard desirs the session to think upon som convenient way to secure him from trowble in time coming. In order to this the minister desird the clark to produce the last act anent buriall stons which was march 3 in anno 1672 the tenor qrof follows that no owt-pariochinar showld bring in a burial ston to the church zeard without libertie asked and granted be the minister and session under the pain of ten merks qlk

the session does ratifie de novo and morover the minister and session ordains all both owt-pariochiners and in-pariochiners who hes stones without names on them that they shall put on there names betuixt this and september next that so trowble may be showned in time coming with certification that who so fails the minister and session will dispose upon those burial stons as they think best fitting and this act is ordained to be made publik that none pretend ignorance." It would be interesting to know what in that century was looked upon as "debetable" in tombstones; unfortunately, the book gives no particulars.

In view of all that the crowded patch of ground which forms the old churchyard has been in the past to Alyth, it cannot be too highly honoured or too carefully tended, and though our own beloved dead cannot be buried there, our steps might well turn sometimes to the hallowed spot where our forefathers lie.

# THE SCHOOL.

In spite of the Reformers' zealous desire, expressed from 1560 onward, that schools should be set up by law in every parish and endowed with a portion of the patrimony of the Church, individual greed long triumphed, and Scotland had to content itself with the precarious and partial education of adventure schools till 1633, when a local option act permitted the erection of a school and the assessment of the heritors for payment of the schoolmaster in any parish where the heritors and parishioners consented. In 1646 the duty was imposed upon the heritors of all parishes, and the Reformation hope seemed to be in a manner realised, though poorly, but a few years saw the act repealed, and it was not till 1696 that the system of Parish Schools, which did so much for the land down to 1872, was finally established.

Our old Session Book (1669-1688), though giving no account of our first schools and schoolmasters, at least shews that Alyth was one of the places which did not need to wait till 1696 for a parish school; and it is worth while noting that our first volume of Minutes shews there was a schoolmaster, and therefore a school, in Alyth in 1637—the date at which the volume opens—also that in 1648, and again in 1649, the minister called meetings of the whole of the heritors "for the esteblishing of ane scool aecording to the

act of parliament"; but while the heritors agreed, there was an excuse on each occasion for doing nothing.

The Minute of November 12, 1676, shews that the school then existing had been erected during the ministry of Mr. John Rattray: "The minister did mention that fourscore merk band resting by his father in laue to the session and was satisfied to allou so much of that money which he had wared in building of the seool at the sessions earnest desire together with other 25 merks whilk his father in laue was resting to them and there wil be yet found resting unpayed to the minister of the expences wared out in building of the scool threescore ten merks 6 shll 8d."

The eighty merks mentioned here were lent on bond to Mr. Rattray on June 23, 1672, and perhaps he built the school about that time. Yet, on the other hand, one would naturally suppose that he would not have taken the responsibility of building the school upon himself after 1669, when a "Colleague and Helper" was appointed. Certainly if this school was erected so late as 1672, the repairs of February 1, 1680, would seem to speak either of bad building or bad boys: "Given to David fentowne and James forester measones for bigging up the bak wall of the scooll qlk was fallin 26 shll 8d and to David smith for makeing mortar 13 shll 4d." Evidently the school was "an auld clay biggin," if "mortar" meant what it still does in these parts.

By December 3, 1682, the roof had also to be

attended to, and there was "given to David smithe beddell for gathering thaek thorow the paroch and bringing it to the schoole 16 shll." We are not surprised at the thatched roof, but the collection in kind is illuminating!

On February 4, 1683, there was "given for fastining the choks and schoole uindows 6 shll 4d," and in August, 1684, there were required two new "fowrms to the schooll," while in the same month of the year after there was "given to Wm. smithe and Gilbert fife for claying of the school chimnay and ualls 3 lib. uhereof ther was 30 shll taken owt of the box." The parish school of Alyth was evidently of the Highland-hut type of architecture; but probably it would be a mistake to infer that the chimney consisted of a wooden core encircled with clay whipped round with straw ropes—themselves mixed and covered with clay, and that the walls were pointed with the same material. More probably a plastering of the interior is meant. Houses are still to be found in Glenisla with the rough stone chimney thus plastered to give the soot as little as possible to cling to, and even in Alyth itself the few remaining houses of that date have partitions originally composed merely of clay and straw, so that clay plaster inside would be quite in keeping.

The school fees were six shillings and eightpence (*i.e.*, half a merk) per quarter, as is stated in a couple of payments on behalf of poor children, and implied in other instances where the money but not the time

is mentioned, *e.g.*, March 27, 1687: "given to the schoolmaster for learning a poor scholar 6sh 8d."

The same fee was given to the teachers of adventure schools, two of whom—Catherine Henderson and ———Chalmers—were paid in May, 1681, for "learning" poor children. In September, 1687, Margaret Duglish, seemingly also a dressmaker (since she was hired earlier in the year to do an extensive mending of the mortcloth), got the regular quarter's payment for "teaching" a poor scholar. Such adventure schools must have existed in Scotland from the Reformation at least, and Alyth had a full supply of them less than a hundred years ago not only in the town but also in the surrounding country districts. Leitfie, Bankhead, Little Dundee (a field's breadth below Pitcrocknie), Hillock of Fyal, The Fauds of Bamff, Gauldswell preceded by The Drum above Mains of Creuchies—to search no further—had all their schools at that time, and since there was the same popular thirst for education in the end of the seventeenth century, the supply would not be scarcer then. Small and mean, and taught by those who must have been content to "cultivate literature on a little oatmeal," they prepared the boys and girls for the parish school, which, though itself small and mean, thatched and "clayed," and boasting but a single fire, was the Academy of the parish, and, being taught by a University graduate, could give sound instruction and send forward its pupils, if need be, to the University itself.

# THE CHAPEL AT BLACKLUNANS.

SITUATED in a picturesque part of the parish, near Drumfork, and about thirteen miles from Alyth by the nearest public road, though perhaps not more than ten by the completely neglected moor road past Craighead, are the ancient chapel and graveyard of Blacklunans.

The graveyard, in which people of the neighbourhood are still buried, is an irregular oblong, the North wall being ninety-six feet in length, the South eighty-eight, the East end about fifty-four, and the West fifty-six. Towards the East end of the graveyard, and with its back to the North wall, stands the ruin of the chapel, which is twenty-six feet in length from East to West, and thirteen feet in breadth.

No tradition of its age has ever reached me, and it is overlooked by Macgibbon and Ross's *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland;* but there are references to it in our old Session Records, and probably the first mention of it is on July 2, 1671, when the old minister, Mr. John Rattray, preached twice in the church at Alyth, "but no examination becawse Mr Thomas was preatching in the chaple of blaklunans in the head of our parish." On July 28, 1672, Mr. Thomas Robertson "preached in Blaklownance . . . and keiped session ther" as there was a case of discipline. And though there were occasional

omissions, for reasons that one can sometimes guess or gather, the intention was evidently to have service once every summer, the last two mentioned in the volume (1686-1687) being conducted by Mr. John Lousone, who was Mr. Thomas Robertson's successor.

The annual services in the chapel at Blaeklunans would be largely for the convenience of catechising old and young together. The Minute of August 23, 1674, refers to this catechising: "Mr Thomas Robertson our minister preatching and examining this day in the head of our parochin at blaklunans," and in 1677, when no service was held, the minister intimated on the Sabbath before the Communion "that he was to be at blacklunnans . . . one wednesday next for to examin there." This very intimation implies, however, that there would be Blaeklunans people in the Alyth Parish Church on that day to hear it and to make it generally known. The same attendance of the able bodied is shewn by cases of discipline before the Session at Alyth, where delinquents from Blaeklunans had to go to the stool of repentance several Sundays in succession, and by the fact, mentioned in its appropriate place, that one from that district was chosen deacon.

But naturally the attendance of parishioners living at such a distance was not good, and in our earlier records the fact is confessed and a quaint and vivid account is given of the method adopted to improve it. On April 7, 1650, Robert Spalding, elder, John Adam, William Rattray, and John Robertson *alias* Croian were required to bring each a quarter of the people

"evrie ilk sabbathe abowt successivlie" so that everybody should be at the church at least once a month. Week by week, as a rule, the attendance, and sometimes the non-attendance, is minuted till December 15, when it is regretted that the people of "Blacklunance" do not come in their prescribed order, "oft tymes being impedit bothe by trowbles and rowghnes of the way." But, though it is added that "the session resolves to tak some cowrse heirin," no more is related of the matter. Possibly the chapel may have been built in consequence of the resolve, and yet it seems strange, if that were so, that there is no trace of the building of it, nor yet of its being put to use till it is introduced to us as already related. From that mode of introduction one could scarcely infer whether the chapel was ancient or modern. In any case, the people were expected to come as often as they could to the church at Alyth.

After such a long walk or ride, the church-goers would be tired, even though they came across the hills at the nearest, barefooted, no doubt, many of them, till they reached the town, and as the scattered pews of varied dates were private property, and as most of those who did not care to stand during the whole service had to bring stools to church, we are not surprised to find in August, 1670, "Robt. Spalding of drumfork in name of himself and the rest of the heretors and fewars of blaklunans" in conjunction with "James Rattray fier of Rannagullon, Jon Robtson of tillemurdo, David Rattray of west forrest," "craving

places to set sets in for their accomodation and hearing of the word." On the day appointed for a meeting of Session and heritors, David Kinloch of Aberbothrie (ancestor of the Kinlochs of Kinloch) "appeared personallie requyring also that he might have place to put a seat in," and thus the whole business was opened up.

Not only does our book of records shew that the people of the Blacklunans district attended the church in Alyth, distant though it was, but it shews that they did their part in repairing it, for in June and July, 1676, they are mentioned among those who, for this purpose, sent "horse" to Dundee for limestone.

This was not the only chapel in the parish, for, not to speak of St. Ninian's Chapel in the churchyard, the name of the farm of Chapelhill bears witness to another. And this witness is confirmed by the names of two fields on the way thither, separated by the public road—the one on Aberbothrie and the other on Rannaleroch—each called "The Chaplan-bank." Nothing seems to be known, however, of this chapel. But near by, we understand, was a place called Gilfailzie, which may mean "at the sod church," a name which would, therefore, account both for its antiquity and its decay. Even if the interpretation be more properly "at the church of the place of sods," there is the indication of a very ancient Celtic place of worship.

Our oldest Session Records, however, bear witness to no services outside Alyth except to those held at the chapel of Blacklunans.

# CLOSING WORDS.

These studies in our old Session Book, which have been appearing in the Alyth Supplement to *Life and Work* since 1910, as space permitted, have cost a good deal of time and pains; but they have now come to an end, and the writer says farewell to the volume with relief, yet not without regret.

It may be recalled that in the introductory chapter the reason given for beginning with our second volume of Minutes instead of the first was that the second was in our own possession, "and could be riddled by degrees." This was a decided advantage, but the phrase reminds one of the farmer's advice to his men working in the barn, in the days when many things now done by machinery were done by hand: "See and riddle out a' the caff now, boys; I wouldna mind sae muckle if ye were to leave a pile or twa o' corn!"

It cannot be pretended that all the chaff has been riddled out from this volume of records, but if any one should say there is too much of it, let him consider the spirit of the farmer's advice as applicable to riddlers of all sorts.

Sometimes information has been sought elsewhere than in this volume itself, so as to save false deductions or to complete the subject in hand. It was necessary, for instance, to quote occasionally from our first volume,

now in Edinburgh, or from the Presbytery Records; and it was necessary to say not a little at times by way of introduction or explanation. But when all is said and done, the story is not long, and even what has not been riddled out of the volume which we have been professing to study has always had some relation to it.

Whether some of our riddlings are to be counted chaff or corn, we have made a few real discoveries, we have corrected some current mistakes, and we have come across many things that were interesting to local readers, and may be interesting to a wider circle.

# APPENDIX.

## NOTE A.

### Inscriptions in the Ministers' Burial Place.

In the Ministers' Burial Place there are three tablets. One of these is built into the wall of the ancient sacristy, another is in the built-up door that had originally led from the sacristy to the chancel, and the third faces the other two. The last is hard sandstone, but the others are soft, and being no longer sheltered by the ivy which used to form a sort of a canopy high above them, they have decayed with some rapidity since I first examined them about 1905, and it seems unlikely that the upper half of the oldest, at least, will ever be deciphered at any future time. Some portions of the lettering which had swelled up from the face of the stone and which were still capable of giving valuable guidance in 1905 have now fallen away. Even at that time success in deciphering required some imagination as well as eyesight. One had to guess the words that might be expected, after measuring a bit of a line to see how many letters it could hold of the proper size. If the guess were a happy one, little traces of letters and especially the tops of letters here and there would give evidence in its favour; if it were erroneous another had to be tried. In the end every word yielded up its secret, including even the obliterated surname of the person

commemorated in the older and more decayed stone, viz., Ramsay; for on the shield above the tombstone the husband's place is occupied by the Coat of Arms of the Rattrays, while the wife's place is occupied by what seems to be the Eagle of the Ramsays—part of a wing and a claw being all that are left. This evidence was fortified by the initials at the side of the shield $\frac{\text{JR}}{\text{MR}}$, the initials of John Rattray, and, as I inferred, Margaret Ramsay, while the space in the body of the inscription itself permitted of exactly six letters as in "Ramsay," so that there was every ground for believing that this word also was correct. I ought to say, however, that the word pœna in the last line of the inscription which follows (there spelt pæna) is due not to me (for, misled by a peculiar and decayed final letter, I had taken it to be pæne) but to a happy inference by Professor Ramsay to whom it was submitted. Some years later the Rev. John Hunter, minister of Rattray, discovered from the Perth Sasines that the name of John Rattray's wife had been correctly inferred. The inscription is as follows:—

HIC SITA EST [MARGARITA
RAMSAY] CONJUNX MR IO
RATTRAY HUJUS ECC-
LESIÆ PASTORIS, QUÆ
OBIIT 24 MAII 1671
ÆTATIS SUÆ 65.
MARGARITAMEOS CHARISSIMA
COMPAR AMORES
QUÆ TULIT HOS HABEAT
SECUM SERVETQUE SEPULCHRO.

SPES ALTERA VITÆ
NASCI PÆNA LABOR VITA NECESSE
MORI.

Here lies Margaret Ramsay, wife of John Rattray, M.A., minister of this church, who died on 24th May, 1671, in her 65th year.

May Margaret, the dear companion who possessed my affections, retain them with her and preserve them in the tomb.

There is hope of a second life. Birth's a doom, life is toil, death inevitable.

The epitaph in the built-up doorway between the sacristy and the chancel is as follows:—

M

I T

1 7 1 9

Hic r[equiescens] Mr Johannes
Thomson Pastor Parochiæ
De Alyth sepelitur quam
Cum fidelitate xvii annos vii
Menses cur[avit et] suæ ætatis xlii
Anno, xxix die Dec: a natu Christo
mdccxix morte extinctus
fuit.

Stella fuit lucem præbens in tramite
noctu
Et dux et præco clamavit o credite
mi grex
In Christum qui post hic sancte
vixerat annos
Octo bis octavum (eheu) lustrum
clauserat ætas.

This may be freely translated:—

In this place of rest lies buried John Thomson, M.A., minister of the Parish of Alyth, which he served faithfully for seventeen years and seven months. At the age of forty-one on the 29th of December, 1719 A.D., the light of his life was extinguished.

He was a star furnishing light in life's dark pathway. Both by example and by precept he called aloud "O my flock have faith in Christ." And after living in holiness here twice eight years, his age (well nigh ended, alas!) had closed its eighth lustre.

The third tombstone is built on the new wall which stands where the back wall of the sacristy once stood, and though, like the last, it does not come within our present limits it had better be given here for preservation:—

IT IS APPOYNTED FOR ALL MEN
ONCE TO DIE. HEB. 9.
HIC SITUS EST PASTOR REVERENDUS PIETATE & MORUM INTEGRITATE CELEBRIS MR THOMAS LUNDINUS, QUI HUIC ECCLESIÆ 34 ANNOS PRÆFUIT UNACUM CONJUGE SUA JOHANNA BLAIR CONSEPULTUS. ILLA FEBRI CORREPTA PRIMUM OBIIT 22 DIE MAII ANNO ÆTATIS SUÆ 44. ILLE QUASE FEBRI EX DOLORE CONTRACTA 8 DIE JUNII EXPIRAVIT ANNO
DNI 1636 ÆTATIS SUÆ 57.

Non potest male mori
Qui bene vixerit
& Vix bene moritur
Qui male vixerit.

The Latin part of the foregoing, which is written in neat and choice language, may be rendered:—

Here lies Thomas Lundie, M.A., for thirty-four years minister of this Church—a man revered for his piety and renowned for his blameless character. He was buried in one grave with his wife Johanna Blair, who died of a fever on the 22nd of May, 1636, aged forty-three, while he, as though of a fever brought on by grief, departed this life on the 8th of June of the same year, aged 56.

> One cannot die ill who has lived well,
> And one scarcely dies well who has lived ill.

Below this inscription, which is in chaste perpendicular letters, there did not at first appear to be anything except a faint date (1748), but at length it struck me there were two additional lines, the date concluding the second. The first line, if line there be, is in close italics, but neither by the gentle tentative searching of the pencil point nor by taking a careful rubbing on paper have I been able to decipher it; the second is probably

MR J R 1748

From the *New Statistical Account*, however, we learn the secret. The stone had formerly stood near the pulpit, where it had been erected in 1748 by Mr. John Robertson, the parish minister of that date. Strangely enough, Mr. John Robertson (who bequeathed the Robertson fund) was also buried in one grave with his wife. He died of a fever 2nd June, 1772, and she died of the same disease next day.

The stone on which Mr. Thomas Lundie and his wife are commemorated is of good hard sandstone, and will no doubt last for many a day. It is chiselled and designed

in the finest taste, with a sweetly curved border surmounted by a shield bearing the Coats of Arms of the Lundies and the Blairs side by side, and the original colour of the shield is still quite apparent.

## NOTE B.

### The Brig o' Room.

No references to the interesting old packhorse bridge at Mill of Queich, called the Brig o' Room or Brig o' Rome, are to be found within the actual covers of the volume which has been the subject of our studies; but they are found in Minutes so near to that volume that they may well be quoted in an Appendix.

This bridge spans the burn, now always called the Alyth Burn, but anciently in all parts of its course called the Queich, at the only place below the Old Bridge of Alyth where the stream is narrowed and tethered within natural piers by banks of sandstone.

While in print the name now usually appears as Brig o' Room, most people say Brig o' Rome, but old people always said Brig o' Rume (French *u*). It was named after a little group of houses at its North end called by that name, and in our oldest lists of baptisms, etc., the place is written both Rome and Room—though whether Room was pronounced in the early seventeenth century precisely as we should pronounce it may be open to question.

This bridge, like other packhorse bridges, including the old Bridge of Alyth in its original form, is without

Brig o' Room.

See page 246.

parapets; and, like the bridge over the Drondochie Burn, it is of the favourite "sex fitts of breed."

In its present form at least, the date of the Bridge of Room seems to be very definitely fixed by the Session Minute of April 27, 1713, "The which day James Hendersone in Quich represented that the Bridge at twich is now built and that therefor the work men crave the money for their work, which being considered, the money which was collected through the paroch for defraying the expenses of building the sd: Bridge was appointed to be given to the sd: workmen upon a recept from William Andersone and ye sd: James Hendersone."

The date thus fixed suits the style of bridge thoroughly; but there had been some sort of bridge there previously, for on November 7, 1659, there is a Minute which reads: "Givin to David Fenton and Jon lamb 4 (?) sh for helping to mend the bridge of rome." Probably it is a wooden bridge which is here referred to. David Fenton and John Lamb were masons, it is true; but the piers at each side would require some mason work to fit them for beams, and that mason work would sometimes need inexpensive repair such as this.

Like other bridges of the type, this one is fabled to have been built by the Romans; and, in view of the name, appearances were more in favour of that fond fancy than usual, inasmuch as nothing remains to mark the site of the houses that bore the name except a tree. Whether the name itself had been originally adopted from the city of Rome or whether it had an independent Celtic or Saxon origin, as it might have, is now merely a question of phonetics and of likelihood.

## NOTE C.

### The Manse.

At the visitation of the church of Alyth by the Presbytery on September 27, 1670, Mr. John Rattray, the old minister, produced proof that when his predecessor, Mr. Thomas Lundie, came to the parish in 1602, he "found nothing but ruinous walls of a manse, and that the then present manse was built by the said Mr. Thomas." This new manse had been valued by Alexander, Bishop of Dunkeld, on the advice of men of skill, at 700 merks, and at this price Mr. John Rattray had bought it from the executors of his predecessor. He now desired that an "apprysall" should be made, and that the heritors should pay accordingly. The Presbytery, accepting the proofs put forward, proceeded as desired; and in the afternoon four men of skill brought in a report wherein the value was set down at 962 merks or about 641 pounds.

Perhaps the site of the "ruinous walls" may have been across the middle of the present Manse garden, facing South. At all events, foundations have been come upon there.

As an addition to the chapter on prices, and interesting to some, it may be set down that the two masons reported fourteen roods of mason work in the Manse, and they judged "the expenss to the minister and the value of it now to be fourtie merks each rude." They valued the hewn work at another 100 merks. The two wrights valued the whole timber work, "lofts, partitions, doors, windowes, chimneyes, barnes, byres, glasses, stencheons, thack devots" at "thrie hundreth merks one lib. six sh. eight d."

# INDEX.

C.

S.